

# Broadway Translations

*"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale  
Her infinite variety."*

THE IDYLLS  
EPIGRAMS AND OTHER POEMS  
OF THEOCRITUS  
WITH THE  
POEMS OF BION AND MOSCHUS

# Broadway Translations

THE IDYLLS OF  
THEOCRITUS  
WITH THE FRAGMENTS  
BION AND MOSCHUS

*Translated by*  
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*With an Introduction*

Fourth Edition  
*(Revised throughout and Reset)*

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TO MY FRIEND  
DUNCAN JOHN ROBERTSON  
THESE TRANSLATIONS ARE  
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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## PREFACE

IN these translations I have endeavoured to satisfy the requirements of the scholar as well as those of the man of letters. To succeed in this dual aim with a verse translation is trebly hard, and I am fully sensible of the difficulty of the task I have undertaken ; but, my labour having been a labour of love, and therefore a delight, I already feel myself in large measure rewarded.

With regard to the metres employed, it might be urged against me that while Theocritus only uses two or three (and indeed chiefly one—the dactylic hexameter), my translation employs nearly a score. The reply would be that any three forms of verse in English might ‘ stale the infinite variety ’ which motive, manner, and metre give to the original. It seemed to me that the best method for an intending translator of Theocritus were to vary his measures a good deal. The principle on which I have gone is briefly this : to use blank verse for dialogue and description, rimed anapaestic metres for lyric passages, and unrimed dactylic hexameters for narrative. But I have not strictly adhered to this arrangement ; I occasionally use the heroic couplet and other

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forms, even attempting a sort of Phalæcian hendecasyllables, that 'dainty metre of Catullus,' in *Id.* xxviii. Though sometimes altered a little, the lyric metres I employ are mainly those already familiar to us. Thanks to the metrical marvels that were accomplished in this field by a great poet of the last generation, a translator has here no difficulty in finding a beautiful mould for his work. One might add that much in the tone and even in the expression of modern English poetry is favourable to the translator of Greek poetry. For perhaps it may be said without cavil that no age has better understood both the spirit and the letter of Greek literature than our own. In our translations we no longer welcome or allow conceptions foreign to the original, and in our desire to get as close as possible to the thought and expression of a Greek poet, we have sometimes even thrown aside verse altogether and used plain prose—and in certain famous instances with great success. Still, verse must remain the fitting medium for the translation of poetry.

The only originality to which I venture to lay claim is in the structure of my hexameters.<sup>1</sup> English dactylic hexameters will perhaps never become a standard form of verse, but still they may be made so as not to shock the ear with gross false quantities. I have endeavoured to avoid

<sup>1</sup> I refer here to my unrimed hexameters made on the classical model (*Ids.* vi. and xxviii. also, however, follow my metrical principles)



these by never letting the second or third syllable in a dactyl pass as short when (1) such syllable ends in two different consonants, unless one be a liquid,<sup>1</sup> or when (2) it ends in a consonant, and the next syllable or word begins with a consonant, unless (a) this latter consonant be *h*, *w*, or *y*,<sup>2</sup> or (b) either of them be one of the liquids, or (c) the aforesaid syllable be an easily slurred vocable like *with*, *of*, or the ending *ing*. Doubtless, stress must largely take the place of quantity; but still, the nearer one can bring one's line to the classical model, *consistently with the genius of English verse*, the more harmonious it becomes. English poets that have employed this metre have almost universally neglected quantity.<sup>3</sup> They have also neglected *cæsura*—another principle which I have endeavoured to follow so far as it is possible in a language which, by its overwhelmingly stress-accented nature, precludes the *ictus* of the verse

<sup>1</sup> My self-imposed law of the liquid resulted in a *labor improbus*, and I now regard it merely as a 'counsel of perfection.' Were the work to do again, I might frequently disregard this principle. Still, one must avoid a clash of consonants in the short notes of the dactyl

<sup>2</sup> Words beginning with *h*, *w*, or *y*, may be regarded as beginning with a vowel, as conversely words like *one* and *once* may be regarded as beginning with a consonant.




<sup>3</sup> Long vowels and diphthongs, not long by position, may be scanned as short, when unaccented; but unaccented naturally short syllables cannot be scanned long, unless they are long by position, or end the line. A monosyllabic 'short' may be scanned long, if an important word—*e.g.* a noun, pronoun, or verb—when the *ictus* is on it. Syllables with a *z* sound, like the words *has* and *is*, are 'common' I have used a certain freedom in the case of proper names.

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from falling on an unstressed syllable.<sup>1</sup> *Cæsurae* in English must of necessity be mainly monosyllables. The disrepute which hexameters have incurred among us arises largely from the neglect of quantity and *cæsura* which, as I have already said, our poets have shown; but still, naturally, the mere fact that the beat of the verse *must* in English coincide with the stress (natural or oratorical) of the word, avoid falling on unimportant words, and (as far as possible) not skip important ones, makes this purely dactylo-spondaic metre somewhat monotonous. Moreover, good spondees are rare in English, and the English dactylic 'lilt' has a tendency, not always recognised, to sound like prose. This, however, is not true of *anapæstic* hexameters,<sup>2</sup> unrimed varieties

<sup>1</sup> This has sometimes been disputed (*e.g.* see the late W. J. Stone's treatise on the use of classical metres in English), but, I think, quite unsuccessfully. It cannot be too often asserted that the English stress-accent dominates the word. It hits the accented syllable so hard that it can flatten a naturally short vowel into a long one (such syllable may, however, occasionally be scanned short, when unaccented by the metre, unless necessarily long by position).


*N B*—For metrical purposes I regard English as spelt phonetically.

<sup>2</sup> The true dactylic 'lilt' would seem (musically expressed) to be this: , the anapæstic this: . Now, in English, the dactyl is apt to degenerate into a triplet .

with the metre-accent so distributed—a prosaic cadence. The Greek and Latin dactyl was *tūm-ti ti*, and not *tūmity*. Take Virgil's famous line, 'Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum'. If we read *tūmity*, the horse is only cantering;

of which would, I believe, form the best metre for a translation of Homer.

And now a word with regard to the language of my translation. To many people it will appear—as it has already appeared to more than one authority—that the proper vehicle for translating Theocritus would be Scots. But apart from the fact that Scots has broader vowels than English, what other analogy does it bear to Doric Greek? Was Scots ever adopted by English poets as Doric was adopted for lyric purposes by the Attic tragedians? <sup>1</sup> Had Doric Greek in the time of Theocritus fallen into desuetude as Scots has? Had it become the all-but exclusive language of the common folk in lands of Doric speech? Had it, through corruption and degradation, come to sound vulgar in well-bred Dorian ears? Again, are the associations of the Theocritean idylls in any way comparable with anything in Scottish literature? Do Allan Ramsay's people, for example, have the faintest far-away resemblance to those of Theocritus? Can one imagine a Lothian shepherd pouring forth a passionate song about a beautiful youth? To me it seems that all these questions must be answered 'in the negative.' Moreover, there are other reasons

If we read *tūm-tū tū*, it is galloping. Of course we may scan an English dactylic hexameter thus:  and so get rid of the triplet cadence; and indeed that is what the 'anapæstic suck,' as Prof. Saintsbury calls it, makes us tend always to do

<sup>1</sup> It is now held, however, by some that the language of the Greek chorus was really old Attic.

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against translating Theocritus into Scots, which in themselves would be sufficient. For example, Theocritus does not write Doric alone, he also uses Æolic and epic forms. These last naturally are taken from Homer and often occur in the heroic pieces. Now Homer was to the Greeks what the Bible, Shakespeare, and Milton are to us. In translating Theocritus, therefore, one's diction ought sometimes surely to recall Milton, Shakespeare, and the Bible. This reason alone might almost preclude Scots. But, besides this, it cannot be too often insisted on that Theocritus, in spite of all his seeming *naïveté*, was not (as Burns, for example, was) an inspired yeoman, writing mainly for his own class. He was a subtle-minded, self-conscious and delicate artist, living at refined and voluptuous courts in a 'decadent' age of literature, and writing for the pleasure of kings. His style is the flower of a literary hot-house. It is composite, many-coloured, and not without reminiscent archaism. How then could the language of such a poet be transmuted into the language of a people among whose literary qualities 'literary quality' can scarcely be reckoned prominent? No doubt Theocritus had profoundly felt the charm of Sicilian peasant life, just as, it might perhaps be argued, Allan Ramsay had felt the charm of the peasant life he knew. But what a difference there is in the two *milieux*! How unlike Daphnis is to Patie! How different are the wooded slopes of Etna from the bleak Pentland Hills! What a

leap in the imagination from Arethusa to the springs of Habbie's Howe! One concession however I have made to the claims of the dying Scottish tongue. I have occasionally used words which, though not unknown to English ears, are yet much commoner north of the Tweed, I mean homely and poetical words like *whiles*, *yestreen*, *remede*, etc.

I have mainly used the admirable edition of Fritzsche, as amended by Hiller (Ed. 1881), but I have not hesitated to borrow from Paley and Wordsworth when it seemed to me that their readings were better. I have also consulted Ziegler and Moellendorff. M. Legrand's exhaustive *Etude sur Théocrite* has been of great service to me, and I also derived some good ideas from the late R. J. Cholmeley's edition, though I could not always see eye to eye with him.

It has taken me nearly thirty years to bring the work to its present condition, and during that time I received help from several friends—help which I must here gratefully acknowledge.

My best thanks for much acute criticism and much sound advice were due to my friend and former tutor, the late Baron F. de Paravicini of Balliol, who kindly consented to revise my work. I have also to thank the following gentlemen for invaluable aid: Mr P. H. Pritchard, who bestowed endless trouble on my proof-sheets, Prof. A. C. Clark, Fellow of Corpus College, Oxford, who revised my work, Mr J. W. Mackail, late Fellow of Balliol, who gave me some useful hints, Mr

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William Lossel, who proved a most exacting but most stimulating critic, my old friend Mr Alfred Kalisch, and my young friend and former pupil Mr I. A. Richmond, both of whom gave me some excellent suggestions.

Translations of the Epigrams and other poems of Theocritus, and of the poems of Bion and Moschus, have now been added to the work. In the Lament for Adonis and the Lament for Bion I have used anapæstic hexameters (catalectic and acatalectic) but have not observed so strictly the metrical rules I laid down for myself in the case of Theocritus.

J. H. H.

LONDON, *Jan.* 1924

# INTRODUCTION

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

GREEK bucolic poetry, as we know it, begins, if it does not end, with Theocritus.

No doubt there already existed in his time a certain body of popular country-songs, but of these we are acquainted with only two, the "Sorrows of Daphnis" and a "Lityerses Song," of which poems the former occurs in the first Idyll, and the latter in the tenth. How far they were used, polished, and improved by Theocritus it is impossible to say—probably (and by analogy) a good deal. A man of genius "*prend son bien où il le trouve*," and makes it his. So Homer—if we may talk of such a person—did before Theocritus, and so Burns did after him.

But if Theocritus had no ancestors, he has had an enormous progeny; for it is not too much to say that he is the fountain-head of all European pastoral poetry. It is an amazing and significant fact that in almost every line of human achievement the Greeks have shown the way, and this is especially so in literature and in art. (Music seems to be the only art in which the modern world certainly excels the ancient.) In epic,

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lyric, and dramatic poetry, they were pioneers and masters, and when the Greek genius seemed about to lose itself in the quicksands of Alexandrian pedantry, there arose this wonderful new kind of poetry, the pastoral. "*Admirabilis in suo genere*," says Quintilian of Theocritus, and admirably true is the criticism. His was the last great poetic effort due to the Hellenic Muse; for, after Theocritus, we have hardly any first-rate Greek poetry. Bion and Moschus are charming, delicate, and pleasing, but the decadence is quite sensible; they are leading the way to the conceits and mere prettiness of the later Greek writers and to all the simpering and insincere *bergeries* of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France, Italy, and England.

One great poet, and one alone, stands between Theocritus and modern writers of pastoral, and that poet is Virgil.

Now, before entering upon a disquisition on the Idylls, I should like to say a few words about the Eclogues, regarded both absolutely and in relation to my subject here.

The Eclogues of Virgil are among the most exquisite and at the same time most artificial poetry we possess. They are much more artificial than the Idylls of Theocritus, and much less artistic. Yet, by a strange paradox, they are more profoundly charming! Virgil was a very much greater poet than Theocritus, and his depth and greatness show themselves even in those



artificial poems. Let us be under no illusion here. The poet of the "Gallus" (Ec. X) is a much greater spirit than the poet of the "Thalusia" (Id. VII), though the former poem is far inferior to the latter. Virgil, in his Eclogues, has passages and lines of an incomparable and haunting beauty that we never find in Theocritus. He is a "lord of language," and he has a tenderness and depth of soul that make one understand how the Christians of the Middle Ages could not think that he was among the "Lost," but had been privileged to prophesy of the Messiah. Nothing of that kind can be said about our poet. He is a pagan of the pagans. There is not a touch of sadness, not a hint of sympathy with suffering in all his work; he never feels "sick and sorry"; he has no melancholy; the "beauty of sorrow" would have been quite unintelligible to him. He has no yearning, no tears, whereas these are to be found in Virgil almost as much as in any modern poetry. That is a most arresting fact. All is sunshine in the Idylls, or, if a shadow does come, it is clear-cut, thin and transitory. There are no half-shades, no shimmering lights, no mists. On the other hand there is an artistry that makes even Virgil seem a 'prentice hand.' That unerring *rightness* of Greek art is as conspicuous in Theocritus as it is in Homer or in Sophocles. No Italian could attain to it; it is the birthright of the Greeks. To illustrate what I mean, let us look at a few passages from Virgil and compare them with

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analogous passages in Theocritus. And first, as an example of Virgil's artistic inferiority, let us contrast the incantation scene in the eighth Eclogue with that in the second Idyll. The former is obviously imitated from the latter, and there is a curious frigidity about it, whereas the second Idyll is one of the most striking and original poems of all Antiquity, and glows with fierce latent passion. Virgil's poem has some superfluous far-fetched touches in it; in that of Theocritus there is not a word too many, nothing to interrupt the flow of the passionate soliloquy of the forsaken girl. Take the lines :—

<sup>1</sup> *Limus ut hic durescit, et hæc ut cera liquescit  
Uno eodemque igni : sic nostro Daphnis amore.  
Sparge molam et fragiles incende bitumine laurus.  
Daphnis me malus urit, ego hanc in Daphnide  
laurum.*

*Ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim.*  
(Ecl. VIII, 80-84)

and compare them with :—

<sup>2</sup> ὥς τοῦτον τὸν κηρὸν ἐγὼ σὺν δαίμονι τάκω  
ὥς τάκοιθ' ὑπ' ἔρωτος ὁ Μύνδιος αὐτίκα Δέλφεις

<sup>1</sup> As this loam grows hard, and this wax soft in one and the same fire. so may Daphnis in the fire of my love! Sprinkle meal and kindle the crackling laurel-leaves with pitch. The evil-hearted Daphnis burns me and I burn this laurel-leaf in Daphnis' name (Bring Daphnis home from the city, bring him home, my songs)

<sup>2</sup> As I melt this wax with the help of Heaven, so may the Myndian Delphis now melt with love; and as this brazen wheel is whirled by Aphrodite's power, so may he be whirled one day about my door<sup>1</sup> (Magic wheel, draw thou that man to my house)

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χῶς δειεῖθ' ὅδε ῥόμβος ὁ χάλκεος ἐξ Ἀφροδίτας  
ὥς τῆνος δινοῖτο ποθ' ἀμετέρῃσι θύρῃσι.

Ἦν γέ, ἔλαε τί τῇσιν ἐμὸν ποτὶ δῶμα τὸν ἄνδρα.

(*Id.* II, 28-32.)

Virgil's inferiority here is manifest. The comparison contained in the words "Limus ut hic durescit" is awkward and misleading; "bitumine" in the third line is unnecessary, and the fourth line is too antithetical for passionate speech.

Or, again, take :—

<sup>1</sup> *Nunc et oves ultro fugiat lupo, aurea duræ  
Mala ferant quercus, Narcisso floreant alnus,  
Pinguia corticibus sudent electra myrica,  
Certent et cygnis ululæ, sit Tityrus Orpheus,  
Orpheus in silvis, inter delphinas Arion!—*

*Incipe Mœnalias mecum, mea tibia, versus—*

*Omnia vel medium fiant mare!*

and compare it with :—

<sup>2</sup> νῦν ἰα μὲν φορέοιτε βάτοι φορέοιτε δ' ἄκανθαι  
αἱ δὲ καλὰ ἰάρκισσος ἐπ' ἀρκεύθοισι μοιάσαι.

<sup>1</sup> Now may the wolf in fear flee from the sheep, hard oaks bear golden apples, the alder bloom with jonquils, the tamarisks sweat rich amber from their rind, and owls vie with swans; Tityrus be Orpheus—Orpheus in the woods, Arion among the dolphins! (Begin with me the Arcadian song, my pipe. Let all things e'en become mid-ocean!)

<sup>2</sup> Ye brambles and acanthus, now bear ye violets, and let the fair jonquil bloom on the junipers, let all things be mingled, let the pine grow pears, since Daphnis is dying; let the stag bait the dogs, and the mountain owls vie with the nightingales! (Ye Muses, cease, oh, cease the country-song.)

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πάντα δ' ἑναλλα γένοιντο, καὶ ἅ πίτυς ὄχνας ἐνείκαι,  
Δάφνις ἐπεὶ θνάσκει, καὶ τῶς κύνας ὦλαφος ἔλκοι  
κῆξ ὀρέων τοῖ σλῶπες ἀηδόσι δηρίσαιντο.

λήγετε βουκολικᾶς Μοῖσαι ἔτε λήγετ' ἀοιδᾶς.

(*Id.* I, 132-137.)

The Virgilian passage is spoilt by the otiose and frigid line :—

*“Orpheus in silvis, inter delphinas Arion.”*

As for *“omnia vel medium fiant mare,”* it seems to be an unfortunately erroneous reminiscence of

πάντα δ' ἑναλλα γένοιντο.

On the other hand take such passages as :—

<sup>1</sup> *Alpinas a, dura, nives et frigora Rheni  
Me sine sola vides. A, te ne frigora lædant !  
A, tibi ne teneras glacies secet aspera plantas !*

(*Ecl.* X, 47-49)

or :—

<sup>2</sup> *Tristis at ille : “tamen cantabitis, Arcades”  
inquit  
Montibus hæc vestris : soli cantare periti  
Arcades. O, mihi tum quam molliter ossa quies-  
cant,  
Vestra meos olim si fistula dicat amores !*

(*Ecl.* X, 31-34.)

<sup>1</sup> Ah, hard-hearted one, alone and far from me thou beholdest the snows and frosty banks of the Rhine Ah, may the frosts not harm thee ; ah, may no rough ice cut thy tender feet !

<sup>2</sup> Sadly he replied ' And yet, O Arcadians, ye will sing these words to your mountains Only the Arcadians are skilled to sing Oh, how softly would my bones rest then, if one day your pipe should chant my love !'

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Is there not a beauty about those lines—especially about the two last lines of the last passage—that almost brings the tears to one's eyes?

Then again such single lines as :—

*“Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ”*

(And longer shadows fall from the high mountains)  
(*Ecl.* I, 83)

or :—

*“Ite domum saturæ, venit Hesperus, ite capellæ”*

(Go homewards go, my full-fed goats, the evening comes)  
(*Ecl.* X, 77)

have a pensive and wistful loveliness about them that remind one of the paintings of Millet and Corot. This is quite alien to the genius of Theocritus. Once and once only, is there a hint of it, and that is in the “Sorrows of Daphnis” poem in the first Idyll—a poem which he took from the lips of Sicilian peasants. Yet, even there, it is pathos rather than pensiveness that we find. After all, Theocritus was a Southerner and Virgil a Northerner. That, doubtless, might explain much. It is a ‘far cry’ from Mantua to Syracuse.

But now to consider the Idylls in themselves.

It seems to me that four out of the number stand far above the rest, and those are the first, the second, the seventh and the eighth. Of these four poems, my feeling is that on the whole the

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seventh Idyll is the finest. There is a richness and splendour about it that distinguish it from the others. The first Idyll is indeed very beautiful, and with (as I have said) a touch of pathos in it, which we find nowhere else in Theocritus. The second has great power and passion, but the seventh has an exuberance of poetic wealth, and, towards the end of the poem, such a description of natural scenery as is unmatched anywhere in Greek literature—a description that almost seems made for description's sake, and not as a mere background for human happenings, as is the usual Greek way. The eighth excels in pure charm. That great critic Ste. Beuve puts it first; but there I venture to think that he is *par exception*, wrong. The eighth Idyll is a much slighter piece of work than the other three. Delicate, pretty and charming it indeed is, but it has no element of greatness in it. On the other hand the subject of the death of Daphnis (in the first Idyll) is a beautiful one in itself, and one which was known to the whole Grecian world of Sicily, while in the seventh the song about Ageanax and the concluding description of the Winnowing-Feast touch the very height of poetical achievement in the domain of pastoral poetry. There is a splendour of artistry about these two last, a glory of rhythm and colour that remind one of the paintings of Rubens. Each passage ends with a line whose superb sonorousness rings and echoes in the ear as few Theocritean lines do.

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αὐτὸν μελίσσόμενος ἠπεικέλισσεν θεῖα Κομᾶτα

(*Id.* VII, 89)

and

ἐράγματα καὶ μάκωνας ἐν ἀμφοτέραισιν ἔχουσιν

(*Id.* VII, 157)

are magnificent endings. The second Idyll (which like the fifteenth was probably sometimes acted by young gentlewomen of Alexandria) is certainly one of the most strikingly original, powerful and passionate of all the Theocritean poems, and, like all first-class classical work, is intensely romantic—that is to say, the subject is a strange and intensely moving one. It is said that to this day in Sicily young girls in poor Simætha's plight perform similar incantations—only they address their prayers to the Virgin Mary and not to Hecate. This poem too concludes with a singularly beautiful line:—

ἀστέρες εὐκάλοιο κατ' αἴντυγα Νυκτὸς ὁπαδοί.

(*Id.* II, 166.)

I quote those lines because they stand out in Theocritus' work by reason of their sonorousness. His verse does not seem to me to possess singing quality often. Take the opening lines of the first Idyll:—

ἀδύ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα καὶ ἡ πίτυς, αἰπόλε, τήνα  
ἂ ποτὶ ταῖς παγαῖσι μελίσσεται, ἀδὺν δὲ καὶ τὴν  
συρίσδες· μετὰ Πᾶνα τὸ δεύτερον ἄθλον ἀποισῇ.

(*Id.* I, 1-3.)

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Have they not, rather, the sound of wind blowing through a reed-bed? (Indeed, as a language, Greek does not seem to me to have the resonance of Latin, though having greater variety of sound.)

And now a few words as to the vexed question of the relative "naturalness," or the relative "artificiality" of the Idylls. As I have already said, the Eclogues of Virgil are quite artificial poems, and yet have a profound charm about them. His shepherds and goatherds are doubtless borrowed and literary creations, and not taken *sur le vif*.

The peasants of the Italy he knew were not the idyllic people we find in the Eclogues; they were of coarser mould. Virgil borrowed his peasantry pell-mell from the pages of Theocritus, just as he borrowed lines and half-lines from the same source. Occasionally in the Eclogues we have Virgil himself and his friends under feigned names like Tityrus, Corydon and Melibœus, just as we have Theocritus and *his* friends occasionally in the Idylls under such names as Simichides, Lycidas and Amyntas. That is quite true, but whereas in Virgil we *always* have merely literary figures, in Theocritus we often have authentic Sicilian Greek peasants. Doubtless they are looked at through the eyes of an artist, and not through their own eyes. It is conceivable that the peasants of Sicily, had they been able to read Theocritus' poems about them, would have been somewhat scandalized and puzzled—just as (to



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

use a modern instance) English "Tommies" are said to be scandalized and puzzled by Mr Rudyard Kipling's "Soldiers Three," whom they regard as rather "low" personages! The peasant of Sicily was not a down-trodden person, and probably regarded himself as a very fine fellow, and, even when a slave, dreamt of himself as a master of flocks and herds. The realism of Theocritus would probably have somewhat shocked him. But Theocritus gives the *vraie vérité* about him, and lets us see not only the frank coarseness of his nature, but also his child-like charm—a charm of which he himself was doubtless quite unconscious. One must always remember that the peasants of Sicily in the third century B.C. were not like the peasants of Britain in the twentieth century A.D. They lived in sunshine and light-heartedness, and loved to sing and dance. They had singing-contests in which extemporaneous verses were sung. (Even to this day the Sicilian peasants at their merry-makings sing improvised antiphonal songs.) Theocritus merely took what was already there and gave it artistic form.

Another point to be remembered is that whereas Virgil and his friends certainly did not dress up as peasants, Theocritus and his friends probably did. And this would be no mere masquerade. My belief is that in the seventh Idyll we have a perfectly true picture of Theocritus and his friends holiday-making in the island of Cos. They probably did at such times dress

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

as shepherds and goatherds, and do shepherds' and goatherds' work in return for free quarters and food among the island land-owners. Have not young Oxford men been known to do similar things? The "Thalusia" (Id. VII) seems to me a sort of Greek "Bothy." Theocritus and his friends were spending a "long vacation" in Cos, and there enjoying work and play, wine-drinking and love-making. Being young professional men they needed a rest from study, and found change of occupation, combined with country pursuits and literary talk, just what they required. There is such a breath of jollity about this Idyll, that one feels there *must* have been a summer's day spent in Cos on the farm of Phrasidemus and Antigenes at Pyxa.

Theocritus is not artificial in any derogatory sense of the word; he is artistic—a very different, though not incompatible, thing.

The thirty-one Idylls here translated are probably not all of them genuine. Grave doubts have been cast on several, *e.g.* Ids. XIX, XX, XXI, XXIII, XXVII, and XXXI. Such questions however do not concern us here.

Bion of Smyrna and Moschus the Sicilian are the only followers of Theocritus in what may be called "classical" times. Of these we only possess very little, but sufficient to show that they were poets of fine quality, though inferior to Theocritus. It is a pity we have not more of their work.

One of the most beautiful passages in all Greek

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

literature occurs in Moschus' *Lament for Bion*.  
Let me transcribe it here :—

αἶαί ται μαλάχαι μὲν, ἐ-ὰν κατὰ κᾶπον ὕλονται  
ἤδ' οἱ τὰ χλωρὰ σέλινα τό τ' εὐθαλὲς οἴλοι ἄνηθον  
ἴσπεροι αὖ ζῶσι καὶ εἰς ἔτος ἄλλο φέουσι·  
ἄρμεν δ' οἱ μεγάλοι καὶ καρτεροί, οἱ σοφοὶ ἄνδρες,  
ὅππότε τρῶτα θάψωμεν, ἀνάλοισι ἐν χθονὶ λυίλῃ  
εὐδομεν εὖ μάλα μακρὸν ἀτέρμοια νήγρετον ἔπνον.<sup>1</sup>

(Mosch., *Lament for Bion*, 99-104.)

Nothing could surpass the sad loveliness of these  
lines.

J. H. H.

<sup>1</sup> Alas! when the mallows fade in the garden, and the green  
parsley and the lush curling dill, they afterwards live again,  
and grow the next year, but we, the mighty and strong, we  
men so wise, when we die, sleep unheeding in the hollow earth a  
long, long, endless, unawakening sleep.

# THEOCRITUS

## I

### THE SONG OF THE DEATH OF DAPHNIS

#### THYRSIS

Sweet is the music of yon whispering pine  
Beside the springs ; and sweetly pipest thou,  
Goatherd. For thee, next after Pan, the award.  
If his the hornèd buck, thine were the dam ;  
If his the dam, to thee the kid should fall,—  
And dainty flesh have kids as yet un milked.

#### GOATHERD

Sweeter thy singing, shepherd, is to me  
Than the resounding murmur of the lynn  
Which pours from yonder crag ; and were the  
lamb  
To be the Muses' guerdon, thine should be  
The fatling of the fold ; chose they the fatling,  
Thine were the ewe.

#### THYRSIS

I prithee by the Nymphs,  
I prithee, goatherd, seat thee by the knoll  
That rises here among the tamarisks,  
And pipe to me—I'll tend thy goats the while.

# GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

## GOATHERD

Nay, shepherd, nay ; in the heat of summer noon  
I dare not pipe ; for at that hour doth Pan,  
Weary with hunting, take his rest, and him  
I fear. Savage of mood is he, and Wrath  
Sits fierce and grim above his nostrils ever.  
But thou art skilled the Daphnis-dirge to sing,  
And well hast learned the country Muse's lore.  
Come, sit we, Thyrsis, underneath this elm,  
Fronting Priapus and the water-nymphs,  
Here where the oaks are and the shepherd's  
bench

If but thou sing to-day as once thou sang'st  
In strife with Libyan Chromis, thine shall be  
Three milkings of this goat—she suckles twins,  
Yet none the less two pailfuls more can yield—  
And thine shall be a drinking-cup, twy-eared,  
Well waxed, new-made, still smelling of the chisel,  
Around whose lip there twines an ivy-wreath  
With everlastings pranked ; the spray below  
Winds happy in its own gold fruit. Between,  
Divinely wrought, a woman stands, adorned  
With robe and snood ; on either hand of her  
A man with fair long hair, who each with the other  
Wrangles in words, nor moves her heart at all ;  
But now she smiles and looks on one, now throws  
Her light heart to his rival. They, poor lads,  
Are heavy-eyed, and vex themselves in vain.  
An aged fisher, too, is carved thereon,  
Who standing on a rough ledge gathers up  
His ample fishing-net to make a cast,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Toiling amain. With all the force of his limbs  
He seems to work, each sinew of his neck  
Swelling ; the greybeard has a youthlike strength.  
Anigh that wave-worn sire a vineyard bows  
Beneath its comely load of ruddy grapes ;  
A little boy sits on a dry-stone wall  
To watch and ward ; two foxes round him roam ;  
One prowls among the vine-rows pillaging  
The riper clusters, while the other plots  
A raid on the lad's wallet, and has vowed  
To wreck his morning meal. But he the while  
Weaves for himself a pretty grasshopper-net  
With asphodel, fitting it on a rush,  
And heeds no whit his wallet or the vines,  
So happy in his plaiting. About the cup  
The soft acanthus spreads ; a marvel 'tis  
Of dazzling art—a miracle to see.  
To the mariner from Calydon I gave  
A she-goat and a large white cheese for it.  
Ne'er have my lips yet touched it, it remains  
Unhanselled. Gladly will I give it thee,  
If thou wilt sing me that delightful lay.  
I mock thee not.—Come, friend, thou can'st not  
take  
Thy ditty with thee unto Acheron,  
To Acheron where all things are forgot.

# GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

THYRSIS

*Oh, raise, dear Muses, raise a country-song.*

Thyrsis of Etna am I ; oh, hark to him sweetly singing !

Where were ye, Nymphs, ah, where, when Daphnis pined away ?

Not where Anapus flows, or the waters of Acis are springing ;

Not on Etna's peak, but on Pindus, or Tempe's knolls that day.

*O raise, dear Muses, raise a country-song.*

(Him e'en jackals wailed, and for him wolves raised a moaning,

The lion came from the woods and mourned for the fair dead youth.

At his feet was a throng of kine and oxen weeping and groaning,

The heifers and heifer-calves lamented for pity and ruth.)

*O Muses, raise again the country-song.*

First from the hill came Hermes and said : ' What sorrow assails thee,

Daphnis ? Whom dost love ? Prithee, dear lad, tell me true.'

All were gathered together and said : ' Oh, tell what ails thee '—

Shepherds, goatherds, hinds. Priapus came there too,—

*O Muses, raise again the country-song.*

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

And said to him : ‘ Why, poor Daphnis, pine like  
an idle dreamer ?

By every woodland and spring the lass is roaming  
now.

Thee she desires, thou laggard-in-love, thou sorry  
schemer ;

A neatherd once thou wast hight, but now like a  
goatherd art thou.

*O Muses, raise again the country-song.*

When the goatherd sees his flock at their wanton  
amorous playing,

He weeps and says to himself : “ Ah, would I were  
one of you ! ”

And thou, beholding the girls when they laugh,  
would’st fain be a-maying

With them in the dance, fond youth, and thine  
eyes are wet with dew.’

*O Muses, raise again the country-song.*

Not a word did the herdsman speak, nor heeded  
he their beguiling,

But held through his bitter love to the bitter end  
of death.

*O Muses, raise again the country-song.*

And the goddess of Cyprus came ; in her heart  
she was sweetly smiling,

But anger she feigneth still and a cruel word she  
saith :



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

‘Daphnis, thy vaunt was once that Love were  
a paltry foeman—

Hast thou not tried a fall, and been thrown by  
the strong god now ?’

*O Muses, raise again the country-song.*

And he answered and said : ‘ Fell Cypris, accursèd,  
dear to no man,

I shall ne’er see the dawn again ? So be it !—  
yet hearken, thou.

E’en in the underworld shall Daphnis be Love’s  
undoing.—

*O Muses, raise again the country-song.*

To Ida begone, where once in the depths of an  
oak-wood vale

To a herdsman’s lust thou did’st yield, to the voice  
of Anchises’ wooing ;

Sheltering oaks are there—here, nought but galin-  
gale !

In his bloom is Adonis too, his flock to the pasture  
leading ;

His arrow smites the hare, and in hunting he takes  
delight.—

To Diomede hie thee then, and say to him :  
“ Daphnis is bleeding,

Daphnis the herdsman—lo, I challenge thee to the  
fight ! ”

*O Muses, raise again the country-song.*

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Ye jackals and wolves, ye bears that in hill-caves  
have your den,  
Farewell, for Daphnis the herdsman ye ne'er shall  
behold again ;  
No more shall the thicket know him, the grove  
shall know him no more ;  
Farewell, Arethusa, farewell, bright streams that  
from Thymbris pour.  
Low lieth Daphnis now that herded his kine once  
here,  
And led to the side of the water his heifer-calf and  
steer.

*O Muses, raise again the country-song.*

Pan, O Pan, art roaming the high Lycæan brow,  
Or ranging Mænalus' hill ?—To Sicily speed thee  
now.

The barrow of Helice leave, and the cairn upon  
Arcas' grave,  
That marvel to blessèd gods—Come hither across  
the wave—

*Oh, cease, ye Muses, cease the country-song.*

Hither and take this pipe, wax-banded, a lovely  
thing,  
My pan-pipe honey-sweet, that curves on the lip,  
O King !  
For Love will hale me away unto Hades' house  
ere long.

*Oh, cease, ye Muses, cease the country-song.*

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

On you, O acanthus and bramble, may violets  
blossom now

And rife may the fair white jonquil wave on the  
juniper bough!

All things madly be mingled, for Daphnis lieth  
alow,

Hounds be baited by harts, and pears on the pine-  
tree grow,

Owls of the hillside vie with the nightingales'  
warbling throng!'

*Oh, cease, ye Muses, cease the country-song.*

These were his words, these only, and fain had she  
been to restore him,

But the thread of his life had failed from the  
Fates, and now was an end.

To the river of Death he sped, and away the  
waters bore him,

A man by the Nymphs belov'd, and the Muses  
called him friend.

*Oh, cease, ye Muses, cease the country-song.*

Bring hither now the goat for me to milk,  
And give the cup, that I may make libation  
Unto the Muses. Muses, fare ye well—  
Oh, fare ye well! Some other while I'll sing  
A sweeter song.

GOATHERD

O Thyrsis, may thy mouth  
Be filled with honey and the honeycomb!

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Sweet figs of Ægilus be thine to eat !  
For never a cicala sings like thee.  
Take the cup, friend, and note its fragrant smell—  
Thou'lt ween that in the fountain of the Hours  
It hath been dipped. Hither, Cissætha, hither !  
Go, milk her, thou. Ye other she-goats there,  
Beware the he-goat's horns and cease your  
    skipping !

## II

### THE INCANTATION

SIMÆTHA

Where are the bay-leaves ?—bring them, Thes-  
tylis—

And where the drugs that work love-witcheries ?  
Go wreathe the bowl with yarn of crimson stain,  
That I may fetter Him who cruel is.

These twelve days past he hath not come to me,  
Nor knows he if alive or dead I be ;  
He hath not beaten at my door, the churl ;  
Some new Love holds his fickle fantasy.

To-morrow to the wrestling-school I'll go,  
And to his face upbraid him with my woe ;  
But now shall glamour bind him. Brightly shine,  
Moon, for to thee will I sing soft and low.

I sing also to nether Hecate,  
Her whom the trembling hounds with terror see  
Coming athwart the barrows and the blood—  
All hail, dread goddess ! bide thou near to me.

Make my spell strong as that of Circe fair,  
Or Perimede of the golden hair,  
Who knew all secret poisons of the earth  
And puissant as Medea's deadly snare.

*Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.*

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

The barley first shall burn in Delphis' name ;  
Sprinkle it, Thestylis.—Would'st mock my shame,  
Thou shameless one ? Whither have flown thy  
wits ?

Say : ' Delphis' bones I sprinkle in the flame.'  
*Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.*

Delphis hath wronged me, and I burn this bay  
In name of Delphis ; as it wastes away,  
Crackling in sudden flare, no ashes seen,  
So be his flesh to fiery flames a prey !

*Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.*

Lo, as I melt this wax, and Heaven implore,  
So may love melt the Myndian to the core ;  
And as love's goddess whirls this brazen wheel,  
So whirl she *him* one day about my door !

*Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.*

The chaff I'll burn now ; Artemis, thy spell  
Can shake the very adamant of Hell.—  
Hark, Thestylis, the dogs howl through the city !  
The Queen is at the cross-roads—beat the bell.

*Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.*

Lo, now the winds and seas asleep are laid,  
But my heart's ache sleeps not and is not stayed,  
Ah me, for I am all aflame for him  
That left me not a wife nor yet a maid !

*Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.*

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Whether with girl or boy my leman lie,  
Thrice will I make libation, thrice will cry :  
' May his new Love be left, as Theseus' bride  
Was left on Dia in the days gone by ! '

*Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.*

Upon Arcadia's hills a herb doth grow  
Whereof the fleet mares taste, and madness  
know ;

May I see Delphis from the wrestling-school  
Rush to my threshold, maddened even so !

*Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.*

This tassel once from Delphis' cloak was shed ;  
The blazing fire shall burn it every shred.

Ah, grievous love, why hast thou clung to me  
Leech-like, until of all my life I'm bled !

*Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.*

An eft I'll bray to-morrow and shall bear  
A philtre unto him.—Now hie thee there  
With these weird herbs and crush them, Thes-  
tylis,

High on his door-post while the signs be fair ;  
And, hark thou, when about it, bear in mind  
To spit and say : ' Here Delphis' bones I grind ! '

*Turn, magic wheel, and draw my Love to me.*

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Now she is gone, I will weep for my love and my miseries.

Where to begin? Who wrought them? Eubulus' daughter young,

Anaxo, basket on head, to the grove of Artemis  
Went with a wild-beast train—a lioness there-  
among.

*Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my  
love.*

Theucarides' Thracian nurse (dear soul, she is now  
no more),

Who dwelt anigh my home, besought me to go  
with her there

To view the pageant. I went, and a long linen  
robe I wore,

And over its folds was flung Clearista's mantle fair.

*Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my  
love.*

Half way, by the homestead of Lycon, I saw  
together go

Delphis and Eudamippus; their beards were as  
golden flame

Of the everlasting flowers, and their breasts had a  
brighter glow

Than thine, O Moon; for the youths' from the  
glory of wrestling came.

*Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my  
love.*



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

I saw, I maddened, I loved, deep-smitten unto the  
core,  
And little I recked of the pageant, my beauty  
wasted away ;  
And I wot not how I won to my home, but fever  
sore  
Shattered me on my couch for many a night and  
day.

*Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my  
love.*

My flesh waxed e'en like saffron in hue, and all my  
hair  
Fell from my head ; nought other than skin and  
bone was I.  
To what old witch's abode did I not often repair,  
But get no healing thence !—and the days went  
ever by.

*Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my  
love.*

To my slave-girl then at last I spake, and my words  
were sooth :  
' Thestyli, find me a cure for love and its grievous  
blight :  
The Myndian hath me in thrall ; go thou and  
watch for the youth  
By the wrestling-school, for there to seat him is  
his delight.

*Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my  
love.*

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

And when thou see'st him alone, nod lightly and  
breathe in his ear :

"Simætha bids thee to her," then lead him  
hither,' I said.

Swiftly she hied her and brought the smooth-  
limbed boy to me here ;

And when I beheld him cross my threshold with  
nimble tread,—

*Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my  
love.*

Colder than snow I grew, and the sweat in rain-  
like streams

Brake from my brow, and not so much could I  
say to him

As a slumbering child may lisp to its mother  
beheld in dreams ;

But like to an image of wax I was rigid in every  
limb.

*Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my  
love.*

False-hearted he gazed upon me, then cast his eyes  
on the floor,

And sat him down on my bed, and sitting there  
thus began :

' Simætha, thy summons outstripped my coming  
here to thy door

As little as I one day Philinus the fair outran.

*Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my  
love.*

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Yea, by sweet Love, I had come unbidden at fall  
of night

With boon-fellows two or three, the dearest I  
could find—

In my bosom the wine-god's fruit, on my head the  
poplar white,

Heracles' chosen leaf with fillets of purple twined.

*Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my  
love.*

And well for you both had it been had ye opened,  
for all youths say

That comely and swift am I ; and sleep my soul  
had assuaged,

Had I kissed thy fair mouth once ; but had  
barred doors kept us away,

Then surely had torch and axe their warfare  
against you waged.

*Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my  
love.*

The Cyprian chiefly, I ween, my thanks for this  
boon hath earned,

And, next to the Cyprian, thou who hast reft me  
from the fire,

Bidding me hither come who am nigh unto ashes  
burned ;

For fiercer than Lipara's flame is the flame of  
love's desire.

*Bethink thee, Lady Moon, whence came my  
love.*

# GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Oft hath it urged from her bower the maiden with  
 passion mad,  
 And the bride from her lord's warm couch.  
 He spake : I heard and was glad,  
 And took him, alas ! by the hand and softly drew  
 him along  
 On the soft bed by my side, and our limbs began  
 to glow,  
 And hotter became our cheeks and sweetly whis-  
 pered we . . .  
 But wherefore blab the rest, dear Lady Moon, to  
 thee ?  
 Love's rites were accomplished ; we there both  
 tasted of love's delight ;  
 And till but of late I found ever favour and grace  
 in his sight,  
 As he did in mine ; but to-day, at what hour  
 the early Dawn  
 Up from the sea to the sky by her fleet-foot steeds  
 was drawn,  
 The mother of Samian Philista the flute-girl hither  
 came,  
 And told me of many things, but chiefly of  
 Delphis' flame ;  
 But whether to girl or boy my leman his homage  
 pays,  
 She knew not rightly, she said,—this alone : that  
 in *some* Love's praise  
 He aye bade pour of the wine unmixed, and sipped  
 in the end,  
 Vowing to deck with flowers the house of his  
 ' darling friend.'

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

These were the stranger's words, and they're true,  
for aforetime he

Came oft and would oft-whiles leave his oil-flask  
here with me.

Alas ! twelve days have gone, yet I have beheld  
him not.

Some new fancy hath ta'en him and me hath he  
quite forgot.

But now shall love-charms bind him ; or, if he  
wrong me more,

And knock not at mine, by the Fates, he shall  
knock at Hades' door ;

For belike 'tis for him, O Queen, dire drugs in my  
coffer lie,

Whose use an Assyrian stranger learned me in days  
gone by.

Farewell to thee now, O Lady ! and turn thy  
steeds to the sea.

With a soul ever steadfast I will endure my hapless  
plight.

Farewell, thou shining goddess, Moon ! and fare-  
well, ye,

Ye other fires that follow the chariot of tranquil  
Night !

### III

#### THE DESPERATE LOVER

I'LL sing to Amaryllis while my goats,  
Tended by Tityrus, browse along the hill.  
O Tityrus, my belov'd one, feed my goats,  
And lead them to the spring, and oh, beware  
The horns of yonder tawny Libyan buck !

Fair Amaryllis, why no more wilt thou call to  
me,  
Me thy 'darling,' and peep from thy bower ?  
Am I loathed by thee ?

Doth my nose seem flat, and my beard like a goat's,  
when thou look'st on my face ?  
Girl, thou wilt drive me to hang myself for this  
disgrace.

Lo ! here, from whence thou bad'st me to gather  
them, half a score  
Of apples I bring, and to-morrow I'll bring thee  
as many more.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Ah, look on my grievous woe ! Ah, would that I  
now might turn  
Into the bee humming there, and win to thy shy  
retreat,  
Lightly thridding the ivy that clings and the  
sheltering fern !

Now know I Love, that dreadful god. A lioness'  
teat  
He sucked, and was reared by his dam in an oak-  
wood's deep recess.  
He drives his dart to the bone ; I am smouldering  
in his heat.

Dark-browed girl of the lovely glance, thou dainti-  
ness,  
Fold thy goatherd to thee that so I may kiss thee,  
dear ;  
For 'e'en in an empty kiss is a sweet delightful-  
ness.'

Thou'lt make me rend in shreds the coronal I  
bring here,  
Of ivy and fragrant parsley and roses wreathed,  
for thee.  
What shall I do, alas, poor wretch ! Wilt thou  
not give ear ?

I'll doff my cloak and leap from yon headland into  
the sea,  
Where Olpis the fisherman watches for tunny  
down in the bay ;  
And if I be drowned—ah well—e'en so thou art  
dear to me.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

This bitter thing did I learn as I mused upon thee  
one day ;  
For a poppy-petal I smote as it lay on my fore-  
arm smooth,  
And the love-in-absence made no smear but  
withered away.

Groio the sieve-divineress told me erewhile the  
truth,  
She who would gather the hay by my side as I  
mowed on the lea ;  
For all my heart is thine, but thou reck'st not of  
me, poor youth.

A white she-goat with her twins have I been  
keeping for thee ;  
But Erithacis begs for them oft—she is darker of  
hue than thou,  
And yet I will give them to her, for thou but  
playest with me.

My right eye quivers—shall I see her now ?  
Here by this pine I'll throw me down and sing ;  
Perchance she'll cast on me a pitying look ;  
Surely her heart is not of adamant.

Hippomenes yearned the maid to wed ;  
Apples he took and ran.  
Love's wave went o'er Atalanta's head  
When she beheld the man.



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Melampus the prophet drove the neat  
From Othrys to Pylos town,  
And Alpheſibœa's mother ſweet  
In Bias' arms lay down.

Adonis, upon the mountain-side,  
So maddened with love's unrest  
Love's goddess, that e'en in death he'll bide  
For ever on her breast.

Happy Endymion is, I trow,  
Who ſleepeth and waketh not,  
And ye profane, ye ſhall never know  
Iaſion's happy lot.

My head is aching, but what careſt thou ?  
I'll ſing no more, but lay me down and die ;  
And wolves ſhall batten on my fleſh. May that  
Be ſweet to thee as honey in the mouth !

## IV

### COUNTRY TATTLE

BATTUS

Ho ! Corydon, are these Philondas' kine ?

CORYDON

Nay, Ægon's ; but he gave them me to tend.

BATTUS

Dost milk them all at evening secretly ?

CORYDON

Nay, for the old man puts the calves himself  
Beneath the mothers, and keeps watch on me.

BATTUS

Whither is gone the master of the herd ?

CORYDON

Dost thou not know ? Milo hath ta'en him off  
Unto Olympia.

BATTUS

Oh, and when had Ægon  
Ever set eye upon the wrestler's oil ?

CORYDON

Men say he is a match for Heracles  
In strength and lustihood.

# GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

BATTUS

My mother says  
That I'm a better man than Polydeuces!

CORYDON

He's ta'en a spade with him and twenty sheep!

BATTUS

Milo will 'teach the wolves to raven' next!

CORYDON

And now the heifers' lowing tells their loss.

BATTUS

Poor beasts! They have a sorry master too.

CORYDON

Poor beasts indeed! they care no more to browse.

BATTUS

That heifer-calf is but a ruck of bones.  
Feeds it on dewdrops like the grasshopper?

CORYDON

Nay; whiles I lead her by Æsarus' banks,  
And give her a fair wisp of tender grass;  
And whiles she'll skip anigh Latumnus' woods.

BATTUS

That red bull's lean. Those starveling citizens,  
The Lampriads, should get it when they make  
To Hera sacrifice—the township's needy.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

CORYDON

Yet to the Mere's mouth, and to Phycus' fields  
He's sent a-browsing, and Neæthus' banks,  
Where grows a foison of delightful herbs,  
Share-wood and vetch and the sweet-smelling  
balm.

BATTUS

Alack! the kine will go to Hades too.  
Fie, Ægon, on thy lust for victory!  
I'll warrant that the pipe is mildewed o'er  
Which erst thou madest!

CORYDON

Nay, by the Nymphs, not it.  
For when the master parted Pisa-wards,  
He left it as a gift to me, and I  
A player am, for sweetly I can raise  
The airs of Glauce and of Pyrrhus too,  
The praises of fair Croto and Zacynthus  
And easterly Lacinium, where of yore  
The boxer Ægon by himself devoured  
Four score of barley-cakes, and from the hill  
Lugged by the hoof a bull, the which he gave  
To Amaryllis, and the women screamed,  
But he, the herdsman, laughed outright thereat.

BATTUS

O sweetest Amaryllis, thee alone  
I never shall forget, though dead thou art.  
Dear as my goats to me, so dear wert thou,  
My lost one. Woe is me! what cruel god  
Hath me in hold?

# GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

CORYDON

Come, be of better cheer,  
Dear Battus ; on the morrow things will mend.  
'The quick have hope, only the dead have none'—  
And 'Zeus gives now the sunshine, now the rain.'

BATTUS

'Tis nothing. Cudgel up the calves from there ;  
The brutes are nibbling at the olive-shoots.  
Sh ! sh ! thou white-skin, sh !

CORYDON

Sh ! sh ! Cymætha !  
Up to the hill, I say ! By Pan, I'll come  
And put harsh ending to thy pranks, unless  
Thou get from there ! See, how she edges back !  
Would that I had a herdsman's crooked staff,  
To beat thee with !

BATTUS

Oh, Corydon, look here,  
In Heaven's name ! A thorn has just run in  
Beneath my ankle-bone. How thick they grow,  
The spindle-thistles ! Plague upon that calf !  
I got the sting while gaping after her.  
Can'st see the thorn ?

CORYDON

Yes, yes, I hold it now  
Between my finger-nails, and here it is !

BATTUS

How small a wound can quell a valiant man !

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

CORYDON

Ne'er come thou bare-foot to the mountain,  
Battus ;  
For prickly-thorns and briars flourish here.

BATTUS

Come, tell me, Corydon, doth Ægon still  
Sport with that dark-haired beauty, once his  
flame ?

CORYDON

Still, rascal, still ! the other day I came  
And found him very busy near the byre.

BATTUS

Well done, old wench ! Surely thou art sib  
To the Satyrs and the goat-legg'd sons of Pan !

V

THE SINGING-MATCH

COMATAS

Away ! goats, from that shepherd of Sibyrtas,  
Lacon ; he stole my goatskin yesterday.

LACON

Sh ! ewe-lambs, from that well there ; see ye not  
Comatas, him who stole my shepherd's-pipe ?

COMATAS

What pipe, thou slave ? and when had'st thou a  
pipe ?

And why dost thou no more with Corydon  
Sputter a tune upon thine oaten straw ?

LACON

The pipe which Lycon gave to me, sir freeman.—  
But when did Lacon ever steal a fleece  
From thee, Comatas ? E'en Eumarides  
Thy master ne'er had aught to sleep upon.

COMATAS

'Twas Crocylus gave it me—a dappled one—  
The day he slew the she-goat to the Nymphs ;  
And thou did'st pine with envy even then,  
Thou knave, and now at length hast rifled me.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

LACON

Nay, by the Sea-shore Pan, it was not Lacon,  
Calæthis' son, who stole thy fleecy coat,—  
Else may I leap, a madman, into Crathis!

COMATAS

Nay, nay, my friend, by those nymphs of the mere  
(Gracious and kind to me may they be ever!),—  
'Twas ne'er Comatas filched thy shepherd's-pipe.

LACON

If I believe thee, Daphnis' woes be mine!  
Yet if thou stake a kid—a paltry prize—  
Then will I sing against thee till thou yield.

COMATAS

'The sow defied Athene'—Well, here stands  
The kid, and do thou gage that fatted lamb.

LACON

How, rogue, can this an equal bargain be?  
Who would a goat shear rather than a sheep?  
As who would rather milk a wretched bitch,  
Than milk a she-goat with a first-born kid?

COMATAS

He that would think, like thee, to worst his mate,—  
A buzzing wasp against a sweet cicala!  
But since thou deem'st the kid unequal gage,  
Here is this he-goat—now begin the strife.

LACON

Nay, why such haste? Thou'rt not afire—thou'lt  
sing



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

More at thine ease beneath this olive-tree,  
Where cooling water flows anigh the woods.  
Here is lush grass, and here a couch is strewn,  
And here are chattering crickets.

COMATAS

‘Haste,’ forsooth!

Nay, nay; but grievèd sore at heart am I  
That thou should’st dare with those unswerving  
eyne

To look upon my face; for thee I taught,  
When thou wast but a child—O Charity,  
This is thine end! Now go and rear wolf-whelps,  
As they were hounds, and be devoured by them!

LACON

When did I learn or hear aught fair from thee,  
Thou envious and unseemly mannikin?

COMATAS

When I did that to thee which made thee weep,  
The while the he-goats topped the bleating shes.

LACON

Thy grave be shallow, hunchback, as that insult!  
Hither and sing!—’twill be thy last attempt.

COMATAS

Thither I will not. Oak and galingale  
Are here, and bees hum sweetly round the hives.  
Here be two springs of water fresh, and here  
The birds are twittering on the bough; the shade  
Is cooler than by thee, and from on high  
The pine-tree flings her cones upon the ground.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

LACON

Here thou shalt tread on sheep-skins and on wool  
Softer than sleep. Thy goat-skins fouler smell  
Than thou thyself. A great bowl of white milk  
Will I set forth, another of sweet oil  
Unto the Nymphs.

COMATAS

Come here, and thou shalt tread  
Soft feathery-fern and flowering penny-royal ;  
And 'neath thee shall be strewn my she-goats' hides  
Far softer than thy lamb-skins, and eight pails  
Of milk will I set forth to Pan, and eight  
Vessels with richest honeycombs therein.

LACON

Begin the singing-match from where thou art ;  
Tread thine own ground and keep thine oaks.  
But who  
Shall judge betwixt us, who ? Would old Lycopas  
The neatherd came this way !

COMATAS

I want not him ;  
But an thou wilt, let's call that woodcutter  
Who's gathering heather nigh thee there. 'Tis  
Morson.

LACON

Well, let us hail him.

COMATAS

Hail him, thou.

# GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

LACON

Ho ! friend,  
Hither and hark awhile ; for we two strive  
For mastery in song. Show me no favour,  
Morson, nor give to him more than his due.

COMATAS

Yea, by the Nymphs, dear Morson, to Comatas  
Grant only what is just, nor favour Lacon.  
Those sheep are 'Thurian Sibyrtas' flock,  
These goats, Eumarides the Sybarite's.

LACON

In the god's name, rogue, who asked thee if the  
flock  
Were mine or master's ?—babbler that thou art !

COMATAS

My best of men, I ever tell the truth ;  
No boaster I—too saucy is thy tongue.

LACON

Come, say thy say, and let our friend return  
Alive to his town. Pan, what a chatterer !

COMATAS

The Muses love me better far than Daphnis and  
his lay ;  
For unto them I offered up two kids upon a day.

LACON

And me Apollo loves full well ; a ram for him I  
rear ;—  
The day of shepherd festival, the Carneia, draweth  
near.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

COMATAS

The she-goats I milk all have twins—barren are  
only twain;  
The maiden looked and cried, 'Alack, dost milk  
alone, poor swain?'

LACON

Aha! but Lacon fills a score of baskets with his  
cheese,  
And fondly clasps the boy he loves upon the  
flowery leas.

COMATAS

With apples Clearista pelts the goatherd with his  
flock;  
And as I pass doth purse her lips and chirp with  
pretty mock.

LACON

To meet my smooth-checked Cratidas drives me  
the shepherd mad,  
For softly float upon his neck the love-locks of the  
lad.

COMATAS

Nay, who wind-flower or briony would liken to  
the rose  
That in a bed beside the wall within a garden  
grows?

LACON

And who than apples of the hill would acorns  
rather eat?  
To these the oak gives bitter husks, but those are  
honey-sweet.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

COMATAS

A cushat will I straightway steal from off the juniper  
Whereon it ever wons to brood, and give it unto  
her.

LACON

And I shall have a woolly fleece for Cratidas to  
keep,  
To make a cloak withal, when I shall clip that  
dusky sheep.

COMATAS

Sh! from the olives, bleating goats, come hither  
from below;  
Here is a sloping knoll, and here are tamarisks enow.

LACON

Back from that oak-tree, Conarus; Cymætha,  
browse this way,  
Where old Phalarus crops the slope which fronts  
the rising day.

COMATAS

A cup and mixing-bowl are mine, cut from the  
cypress-tree;  
Praxiteles the maker was—I keep them, Love, for  
thee.

LACON

My dog can throttle wolves, and holds the flock  
in loving thrall;  
Him will I give to thee, Belov'd, to hunt wild  
beasts withal.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

COMATAS

Crickets that overleap my hedge, for pity's sake,  
I pray,  
No mischief do unto my vines, for youngling  
plants are they.

LACON

Ho there, cicalas, look and see how I the goatherd  
sting !  
This is the same way ye annoy the reapers when  
ye sing.

COMATAS

I loathe the foxes bushy-tailed, that come at shut  
of eve,  
And round by Micon's vineyard prowl a grape or  
two to thieve.

LACON

I hate the lady-birds that come a-sailing on the  
breeze  
To where Philondas grows his figs, and feed their  
fill on these.

COMATAS

Dost thou remember how I played a merry jest on  
thee,  
And how thou did'st enjoy the sport, and cling  
to yonder tree ?

LACON

Not I ; but well I mind that thou wast bound to  
that same oak,  
And cudgelled by Eumarides, who stinted ne'er a  
stroke.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

COMATAS

Ha ! Morson, dost thou note how sore my gibes  
his bosom harrow ?—

Go pluck me withered squills<sup>1</sup> forthwith from off  
some dead man's barrow.

LACON

Methinks I'm hurting *somebody*. Did'st note it,  
Morson, then ?—

Go hie thee unto Hales' banks, and dig up  
cyclamen.

COMATAS

May Himera now flow with milk, and Crathis  
blush with wine,

And berry-clusters rich and ripe upon the marsh-  
wort shine !

LACON

May Sybaris' fountain honey pour, that so at early  
dawn,

Instead of water, honey-dew in the maid's pail be  
drawn !

COMATAS

My she-goats browse on clover-shrub and goats-  
wort on the lea ;

They tread on lentisk leaves, and lie beneath the  
strawberry-tree.

<sup>1</sup> Squills and cyclamen were, presumably, cures for madness

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

LACON

My ewes feed on the balsam sweet that on their  
pasture grows,  
And rock-flower blooming rife and fair with  
blossoms like the rose.

COMATAS

Alcippe kissed me not when I gave her a cushat-  
dove,  
Nor took my face between her hands—her I no  
longer love.

LACON

But dear to me Eumedes is, and dearly he loves  
me ;  
For when I gave a pipe to him, he kissed me  
heartily.

COMATAS

It is not meet the nightingale be challenged by the  
jay,  
Nor swans by hoopoes—but, alack ! thou dearly  
lov'st a fray.

MORSON

I bid the shepherd cease. To thee, Comatas,  
Morson awards the ewe-lamb. Sacrifice her  
Unto the Nymphs, and then to Morson send  
Straightway a portion of her dainty flesh.



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

### COMATAS

By Pan, I'll send it. Frolic, all my herd  
Of young he-goats, and mark how I shall crow  
Over the shepherd Lacon ; for at last  
I've won the lamb. I'll skip you to the sky.  
Cheerly, my hornèd ones ! to-morrow morn  
I'll wash you all in Sybaris' lake.—Ho there !  
Thou wanton white-face, if thou dare to back  
One of the shes, I'll geld thee ere I slay  
The ewe-lamb to the Nymphs.—Again he tries !  
May I become Melanthius, and no more  
Be called Comatas, an I geld thee not !

## VI

### POLYPHEMUS AND GALATEA

DAMÆTAS and the herd-boy Daphnis once,  
To the same spot, O Aratus, on a day  
Together drove their kine. The chin of the one  
Was touched with golden down ; the other bore  
A youthful beard. Both sat them by a spring  
That summer morn, and sang these lays ; and first  
Daphnis began, for he was challenger.

‘ Look how the sea-nymph pelts thy flock, Poly-  
phemus, with apples,  
Mocking the “goatherd man,” calling him  
“laggard-in-love.”  
Fool ! thou regardest not, but sittest merrily  
piping.

Ah, there again, there again ! look at her pelting  
the dog !  
Faithful guard of the flock, he scampers along  
where the ripples  
Break with a gentle splash, sees his reflection  
and yelps.  
Heed well lest he should leap on the limbs of the  
maid when she cometh  
Forth from the sea, and the girl’s beautiful  
body be torn.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Look how she wantons there and sports in the  
midst of the water,  
E'en as a thistle-down tuft sports in the mid-  
summer heat !  
Woody, she will flee, but shunned, will chase, and  
hazard her utmost.  
Oft, Polyphemus, with love evil and good are  
the same.'

Damœtas, answering, thus began to sing :—  
' Yea, by Pan but I saw her, the while she pelted  
my flock there,  
Saw with my one dear eye—mine it will be to  
the end ;  
Plague upon 'Telemus' mouth which once spake  
curses about it—  
Let them go back and roost over the babes in  
his home !  
I too at whiles tease *her*, and scorn to return her  
glances,  
Saying another girl now bides with me here as  
my Love.  
Jealous then she becomes and pines, I swear by  
Apollo,  
Angrily too from the sea spies on the caves and  
the flocks.  
Whiles I hiss my hound on to bark at her, since at  
my wooing  
He with a plaintive whine nestled his nose on  
her thigh.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Haply beholding this oft she will one day send me  
an envoy ;

Ah, but my door shall be closed till she declare  
with an oath

She herself will spread my couch for me here on  
this island.

Ay, nor indeed is my shape all so uncouth to  
behold !

Once on a day as I looked at my face in the calm of  
the ocean,

Fair to me seemed this beard, lovely methought  
was my eye,

Whiter my teeth too shone than the gleam of  
Parian marble ;

Thrice in my breast did I spit lest I should envy  
arouse.

This was a charm which old Cotyttaris learned me  
aforetime,

She who would often of yore pipe to Hippocion's  
hinds.' <sup>1</sup>

Thus sang Damœtas ; then he kissed his friend,

And gave a pipe, and Daphnis gave his flute.

Damœtas fluted and the herdsman piped,

While heifer-calves skipped on the tender grass ;

Neither prevailed ; unworsted were they both.

<sup>1</sup> Probably interpolated from x. 16.

## VII

### THE WINNOWING-FEAST

ONCE on a time three friends walked forth from  
the city together,  
Eucritus, I, and Amyntas, along to the Hales  
wending.  
There Phrasidemus and Antigenes, two sons of  
Lycopes,  
Thanking the goddess of earth, were dighting a  
feast of the firstlings—  
Sprung from the worthies of old they twain, from  
Clyte and Chalcon,  
Chalcon who pressed his knee on the rock and  
struck from his heel there  
Fount Burina; the elms and poplars clustering  
round it  
Mingle their shadowy boughs and over it arch  
their leafage.  
Scarce were we midway yet, nor as yet had  
Brasilas' head-stone  
Ris'n on our view, when lo ! we there by the grace  
of the Muses  
Met with a Cydon man named Lycidas—he was a  
goatherd ;  
None could have other deemed him, for truly he  
looked very like one.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Dangling adown his back was a pale-yellow hide  
of a he-goat  
Hairy and shaggy and thick, still smelling fresh of  
the rennet.  
Round his breast was an old and broad-buckled  
mantle ; his right hand  
Wielded a goatherd's crook—'twas made from the  
wood of the olive.  
Boldly, with smiling eyes and lips full of laughter,  
he hailed me :  
' Simichides, whither dragg'st thy feet in the blaze  
of the noonday,  
Now when the lizard sleeps in the wall and never  
a crested  
Lark flits by ? To a banquet, a guest unbidden  
art hieing ?  
Tread'st thou the vat with a friend, so gaily the  
pebbles are rattling  
Round thy well-shod feet on the roadway ? '

Him then I answered :—

' Lycidas, all men say that among both herdsmen  
and mowers  
First of the pipes is thine, and for that my bosom  
rejoices ;  
Yet, perchance, I too were a rival to fear. This  
journey  
Tends to a firstling-feast ; for a band of com-  
panions is holding  
Solemn festival glad to Demeter the, fair-robed  
goddess,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Her who with bountiful hand hath filled their  
garner with barley.

Come, for the day and way are the same for  
us, ay, let a country-

Ditty be sung by us now ! Mayhap we shall learn  
some secrets

Each from the other, for I am a clear-toned voice  
of the Muses.

All men call me the best of the bards, but ne'er  
do I heed them,

No, by Heaven, no ; for I wot that Samian poet,  
Good Sicelides, yea, and Philetas, would yet be my  
masters.

Vainly in song should I strive with these, as a frog  
with the crickets.'

Guilefully so spake I, and the goatherd, smiling  
sweetly,

Answered and said :—' This crook I will right  
gladly award thee.

Thou art a child of Truth and shaped by the hand  
of the Highest.

Hated of me is a wright that seeks to upraise his  
roof-tree

High as a monarch of hills ; I hate those cockerel poets,  
Those that foolishly crow in strife with the min-  
strel of Chios.

Come then, Simichides, let us raise some song of  
the shepherds.

I will begin. List, friend, and say an the ditty  
content thee,

Ditty that I erewhile on the hill-side wrought into  
music.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

" Fair will Ageanax' course to the Lesbian city  
    be,  
Though the Kids be low in the west and the south  
    wind urge the sea,  
Or Orion all but seem the waves with his foot to  
    spurn,  
If he'll have pity on him whom fires of passion  
    burn ;—  
For love of the boy consumes my heart with a  
    parching drouth.  
Halcyons will lull the seas and the winds of the  
    East and South,—  
Winds that stir the wrack far up on the shore of  
    the waters,  
Halcyons, dearest hawks of the brine unto Nereus'  
    daughters.

Safe may Ageanax reach the Mytilenean shore,  
And safe in the haven rest where storm-winds  
    rave no more !  
That day shall my brows be bound with an odorous  
    wreath of dill,  
Or roses or flag-flower white ; our Ptelean wine  
    shall fill  
The cup and the mixing-bowl, as I lie by the hearth  
    at ease,  
Thinking of him I love ; and the draught shall  
    be drained to the lees.  
Of asphodel, vetch and parsley, my couch shall be  
    thickly made  
E'en to the elbow's height ; on the pan shall beans  
    be laid,



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

And shepherds twain shall flute, while Tityrus  
standing nigh  
Shall sing how Daphnis of old for Xenea came to die,  
And how the hills complained, and the oaks made  
moan that day  
On Himeras' river-banks, as the boy's life waned  
away  
Like snow that melts in the glens of Hæmus or  
Rhodope,  
Or Athos, or where the slopes of utmost Caucasus be.  
He shall sing how the goatherd of old was pent on  
an evil tide,  
By his master's cruel sin, alive in a coffer wide,  
And how the blunt-nosed bees the scent of the  
cedar knew  
And darted away from the meadow and fed him  
with honey-dew.  
For the Muses upon his mouth their sweetest  
nectar had shed.  
Happy Comatas, this was thy joyful lot; thy bed  
A coffer, and honeycomb thy food for a rolling  
year.  
Would that among the quick to-day thou wert  
numbered here!  
Gladly thy bonny goats had I herded the uplands  
o'er,  
Listing the sound of thy song, whilst thou on the  
grassy floor  
Under an oak wert lying, or under a pine-tree's  
shade,  
And thy voice, divine Comatas, delicious music  
made." "

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Such was his lay, and he ceased; and him I  
answered, saying:—

‘ Lycidas, much have I learned from the Nymphs  
as I roamed on the mountains,

Notable songs, whose fame, perchance, hath  
reached unto Heaven.

Yet will I offer the best of them all as a guerdon  
to thee now.

Hearken, my friend, unto this, for dear art thou to  
the Muses.

“ The Loves have sneezed good-luck on Simi-  
chides; he, poor thing,

Is fond of his darling Myrto as goats are fond of  
the Spring.

But Aratus, the friend of his heart, for love of a  
lad makes moan,

And Aristis the noble knows how Aratus is burnt to  
the bone,

Aristis, whom Phœbus himself would suffer to sing  
in his fane.—

Pan, O Pan, in whose lordship is Homole’s lovely  
plain,

To the arms of Aratus bring Philinus the gentle  
boy,—

Or whosoever he is whose love were Aratus’ joy.

Pan, if thou grant this boon, may the lads of  
Arcadia’s hills,

At a lean feast, lash thee not on shoulder and thigh  
with squills,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

But an if thou grant it not, may thy skin be itched  
and red,  
Scratched with thy nails all over, and nettles be  
thy bed !  
'Mid frore Edonian hills thy way be in winter-  
time,  
Thy face to the Hebrus river which flows through  
an icy clime ;  
In summer thy pasturing lie in the Ethiop's far  
demesne,  
Under the Blemyan rock whence Nile is no farther  
seen !—  
But ye, oh, ye Loves, whose cheeks are red as an  
apple is,  
Oh, come from the pleasant waters of Byblis and  
Hyetis,  
And from Cæceus, lofty seat of Dione with yellow  
hair,  
And smite with your shafts, oh, smite Philinus the  
sweet, the fair ;  
For the cruel boy cares nought for my friend's  
love-misery.  
Well, riper is he than a pear, and the women cry :  
' Ho, Philinus, the flower of thy beauty withers  
away ' !—  
Let us weary our feet no more, let us here no  
longer stay  
On watch by his threshold, Aratus ; let chanti-  
cleer's early note  
Call Molon alone to wrestle with chills and a  
choking throat !

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Ours be a quiet mind, and lest we should come to  
harm,  
Let a beldam round us cast the might of a spitting-  
charm." "

These were my words, and he, as aforetime, smiling  
sweetly,  
Gave me the goatherd's crook as a parting gift of  
the Muses ;  
Then to the leftward bent his way and made unto  
Pyxa.  
We to the home of our host Phrasidemus turned  
and betook us,  
Eucritus, I, and the comely Amyntas, and there  
we rejoicing  
Laid us deep on a couch of fragrant rushes and  
vine-leaves.  
Poplars and whispering elms waved o'er it ; a  
sacred fountain  
Babbling and purling gushed from the Naiads'  
grotto anear us ;  
Sunburnt merry cicalas aloft on the shadowy  
branches  
Shrilled their unending song, and afar in the bushes  
of bramble  
Softly the tree-frog chirped, and the crested larks  
and the finches  
Carolled, a turtle crooned, and around those  
murmuring waters  
Darted golden bees ; there all things richly of  
Summer,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Smelt, and of Autumn; pears and apples in  
luscious abundance  
Rolled at our feet and sides, and down on the  
meadow about us  
Sloe-trees drooped their sprays thick-laden with  
purple fruitage.  
Then from the wine-jar's neck was a four-years-old  
seal loosened.  
Say, Castalian Nymphs that haunt Parnassus, was  
ever  
Cup like this in the rocky repair of the centaur  
Pholus  
Held by Chiron the old unto Heracles? Yea,  
and the shepherd,  
He that grazed his flock by the river Anapus, and  
pelted  
Vessels with bergs, that monster immense, what  
nectar did *he* quaff,  
(Then when his legs were beguiled into dancing  
about his cavern),  
Like to the draught, O Nymphs, ye slaked that  
day from the fountain,  
Close by the altar-stone of Demeter, goddess of  
garners?  
There in her heaped-up grain may I on another  
season  
Plant my ample fan, while she stands smiling anear  
it,  
Holding in either hand little sheaves of corn and  
of poppy!

## VIII

### THE TRIUMPH OF DAPHNIS

MENALCAS once upon the lofty hills  
Tending his flock of sheep—so runs the tale—  
Met the fair Daphnis with his herd of kine.  
Both lads had russet hair, and both were young,  
And each was skilled to sing and each to pipe.  
Beholding Daphnis, thus Menalcas spake.

MENALCAS

Daphnis, thou herdsman of the lowing kine,  
Wilt sing with me? Methinks I'll vanquish thee,  
If I may sing my fill.

Then Daphnis answered.

DAPHNIS

Menalcas, shepherd of the woolly sheep,  
Sweet player on the pipe, e'en an thou sang  
Till thou were dead, thou would'st not vanquish  
me.

MENALCAS

Well, wilt thou try, and wilt thou stake a prize?

DAPHNIS

Yea, I will try, and I will stake a prize.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

MENALCAS

What shall we pledge that were a worthy meed ?

DAPHNIS

I'll pledge a calf, pledge thou a full-grown lamb.

MENALCAS

Ne'er will I gage a lamb, for stern my sire ,  
And mother are, and number all the sheep  
At eventide.

DAPHNIS

Well, what then wilt thou gage ?  
What vantage shall the victor gain ?

MENALCAS

A pan-pipe  
Which erst I fashioned fair ; nine reeds it hath  
And equal white wax bands above, below ;  
That will I wager, not my father's wealth.

DAPHNIS

And I too have a pipe with nine sweet reeds  
And equal white wax bands above, below ;  
But late I fashioned it, for still this finger  
Aches where the slit reed cut it.

MENALCAS

Who shall judge  
Betwixt us twain, and hearken to our songs ?

DAPHNIS .

What an we called yon goatherd, 'mong whose kids  
The white-face dog is barking ?

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

So the lads  
Shouted ; the goatherd came to lend an ear ;  
And then they sang, the goatherd gladly judging.  
By lot clear-voiced Menalcas raised the song,  
Then Daphnis in alternate strain took up  
The shepherd's lay ; and thus Menalcas led.

### MENALCAS

Ye dells, ye rivers of race divine,  
If ever my shepherd's-pipe and I  
Made you rejoice with a song of mine,  
Oh pasture my ewe-lambs bounteously.  
If Daphnis his heifers this way bring,  
Let him too have ample welcoming !

### DAPHNIS

Ye founts of water that never fail,  
Ye grassy meadowlands lush and sweet,  
If Daphnis sings like the nightingale,  
Make fat with your fulness this herd of neat.  
His flock if Menalcas hither bring,  
Let him have content in his pasturing.

### MENALCAS

Sheep and goats twin young ones bear,  
Bees fill hives with honeycombs,  
And oaks are taller than elsewhere  
Wherever the beautiful Milo roams.  
But ah, when he will no longer stay ;  
Shepherd and hillside parched are they.



# GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

DAPHNIS

Spring and pasture are everywhere,  
Milk from the swollen udder foams,  
And youngling cattle will feed where'er  
The beautiful maiden *I* love roams.  
But ah, when she will no longer stay,  
Neat and neatherd wither away.

MENALCAS

Great he-goat, of the white herd king,  
To the boundless deep of the forest hie,  
(Hither, ye blunt-nosed kids to the spring !)  
For yonder my Love is wont to lie.  
Speed, hornless one, and say to the boy :  
' Seal-herding once was a god's employ.'

DAPHNIS <sup>1</sup>

. . . . .

MENALCAS

I would not be king of the Peloponnese,  
Nor lord of the Lydian prince's gold ;  
I crave not feet to outrace the breeze,  
But Thee in my arms by this rock to hold,  
And watching our mingled flocks of sheep,  
To carol towards the Sicilian deep.

DAPHNIS

. . . . .

MENALCAS

. . . . .

<sup>1</sup> The principle of parallelism seems to postulate *lacunae* in the MSS here and on the next page.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

DAPHNIS

Storm to the trees is a sore distress,  
To the waters, drouth, to the bird, the snare,  
Toils to the beasts of the wilderness,  
To a man, the love of a maiden fair.  
But I pine not alone, O Zeus, O Sire ;  
Thou too for women hast known desire.

Thus sang the striplings in alternate lays,  
And thus Menalcas led the closing strain.

MENALCAS

Pity my younglings, wolf, to the mothers mercy  
show,  
Wrong me not for that a boy with a many goats  
I go.

Hi ! Lampurus, my dog, art bound in a heavy  
sleep ?  
Ne'er should a hound that herds with a young lad  
slumber deep.

Fearlessly feed, ye ewes, on the tender grass  
your fill ;  
Never a whit shall ye lack when again it grows  
on the hill.

Sh ! sh ! be a-browsing, a-browsing, and swoln let  
your udders be ;  
The lambs shall have some of the milk, and some  
shall be pressed by me.

Then Daphnis with clear voice began to sing.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

### DAPHNIS

A maiden with wedded brows gazed forth from  
that bower there,  
As I passed with my kine yestreen, and she cried,  
'Thou art fair, art fair.'

To her no answer I made, no bitter word would  
I say,  
But kept my eyes on the ground, as I slowly went  
my way.

Sweet is the heifer's lowing, and sweet is the heifer's  
breath,  
And sweet in the summer to lie by a brook that  
murmureth.

Acorns grace the oak, and apples the apple-tree,  
The calf is the pride of the cow, the kine are a  
glory to me.

Thus sang the lads, and thus the goatherd spake.

### GOATHERD

Sweet is thy mouth, and ravishing thy voice,  
Daphnis ; thy song, more pleasing to the ear  
Than honey to the tongue. Take thou the pipes,  
For thou art winner in the singing-match.  
If thou wilt *me* teach as I tend my goats  
Anigh thee, yon she-goat which hath no horns  
I'll give thee as a schooling-fee ; she fills  
The milk-pail ever till it overflows.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

The boy was glad and leaped and clapped his  
hands,

A victor ; even as a fawn might leap  
About its dam. The other's smouldering heart  
Was tossed with grieving like a new-wed maid's.  
And from that day Daphnis was reckoned first  
Among the shepherds, and, when in the flower  
Of youth, took Naïs, that fair nymph, to wife.

## IX

### COUNTRY SONGS

#### A SHEPHERD

Sing, Daphnis, sing a country-song, and first  
Do thou begin, then let Menalcas follow.  
Settle the calves beneath their mothers, lead  
The bulls to the barren kine, and let them browse  
Together o'er the grass among the herd.  
But do thou sing to me a random song,  
In random song Menalcas answering.

#### DAPHNIS' SONG

' Sweet is the lowing of calf and kine,  
And sweet are the pipe and the herdsman's lay ;  
*I* sing sweetly ; a couch is mine  
On the bank of a brook flowing cool alway.  
'Tis made of the fells of heifers white—  
Heifers that nibbling the strawberry-trees  
Were dashed erewhile from a rocky height  
By the gust of a gale from the Libyan seas—

<sup>1</sup> Possibly a *lacuna* here, in which the shepherd described his meeting with Daphnis and Menalcas, and how he asked them to sing.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

And as little I reck of the summer's fire  
As lovers may reck of their parents' ire.'

Thus Daphnis sang to me, Menalcas thus :—

### MENALCAS' SONG

' And I, dear mother Etna, live  
In a cavern fair of the hollow rocks.  
All is mine that a dream may give,  
Sheep and goats in countless flocks ;  
At my head and feet their fells are strown,  
On an oak-fire boils the savoury mess,  
Beech-nuts dry on the flames are thrown  
In time of the winter's windy stress ;  
And as little I reck of the stormy breeze,  
As of nuts a toothless man that hath cheese.'

### THE SHEPHERD

I clapped my hands, and straightway gave a gift—  
A staff that in my father's field had grown,  
Self-shapen, that no craftsman would have  
scorned—

To Daphnis ; to the other, a fair shell,  
A whorled Triton's-horn that erst I spied  
On Hyccara's rocks, and on the flesh thereof  
Had feasted, sharing with four friends ; and he  
Winded the conch.

Hail, pastoral Muses, hail !

Give to the world the song which I that day  
There to the shepherd and the goatherd sang,  
Nor let a silence desecrate my tongue.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

‘ The grasshopper loves the grasshopper aye,  
The ant the ant, and the hawk, they say,  
The hawk,—and *I* love a tuneful lay.  
With melody let my dwelling ring,  
For dear are the daughters of Song to me,  
Sweeter than slumber or sudden Spring,  
Sweeter than flowers to the honey-bee.  
For on whomsoever they look with joy,  
Him never could Circe’s wine destroy.’

## X

### THE TWO REAPERS

MILO

What ails thee now, Bucæus, wretched hind ?  
No longer can'st thou mow thy swathe aright,  
Nor keep thy sickle even with thy mate's,  
But like a sheep whose foot the thorns have gashed,  
That straggles from the flock, so laggest thou.  
How shalt thou fare, poor wight, in the afternoon,  
That wilt not cut into thy corn-rig now ?

BUCÆUS

Untiring reaper, chip of stubborn stone,  
Milo, hast never longed for one afar ?

MILO

Never ; what would a swain with stranger folk ?

BUCÆUS

Hast never, haply, lain awake for love ?

MILO

The gods forbend ! ' Let once the dog lick  
tripe ' . . . !



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

BUCÆUS

But I have been in love these ten days, Milo——

MILO

'Tis clear that thy cup is the wine-barrel ;  
But scarce enough of vinegar have I.

BUCÆUS

—And so my garden all unweeded lies.

MILO

Who hath bewitched thee ?

BUCÆUS

Polybotas' wench,  
That piped of late unto Hippocion's hinds.

MILO

'The god hath caught the knave' ; oh, thou  
shalt have  
Thy darling wish ! The 'grasshopper-girl' will  
lie  
With thee the livelong night !

BUCÆUS

Thou mockest me ;  
But not alone the god of wealth is blind,  
Blind, too, is mad-cap Love ;—so boast thee not.

MILO

Not I, not I. Do thou lay low the corn,  
And sing some love-song in thy darling's praise.  
Sweeter thy labour thus will seem to thee.—  
A singer wert thou surely on a time.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

BUCÆUS

Aid me to sing the praise of the slim girl, Muses,  
aid !

Whatsoever ye touch, ye goddesses, lovely is made.

Sweet Bombyce, ' the gipsy ' they call thee every-  
where ;

Thou art ' withered ' and ' swart,' say they, but I  
say ' honey-fair.'

Dusky are violets, dusky the hyacinth lettered  
with woe ;

Yet, ever these are the blooms that best of the  
coronal show.

The clover lureth the goat, the goat from the  
wolf must flee,

The crane follows after the plough, and raving I  
follow thee.

Would that the fabled wealth of Cræsus of old  
were mine !

Golden images twain had I placed in the Cyprian  
shrine—

Thee with thy pipe and, mayhap, a rose, or an  
apple, too,

Me with my dancing-robe, and shod with the  
Spartan shoe.

Sweet Bombyce, like dice are thy twinkling, dainty  
feet,

Soothing thy voice, thy soul—ah ! I know not if  
*it* be sweet !

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

MILO

Our Bucus has been making pretty songs  
All unbeknown to us ! How well he shaped  
And meted out the verse ! Beshrew my beard  
Which I have grown in vain ! But hearken now  
This ditty of the god-like Lityerses.

‘ Lady of fruits and corn, Demeter, make this  
field  
Easy to till with the plough, and the fulness of  
plenty to yield.

Gatherers, bind the sheaves, lest haply a passer-  
by,  
“ Oh, what useless fellows ! ‘ More money  
gone ’ ” should cry.

Facing the wind of the North, or the fanning of  
Zephyr’s breeze  
Let the cut ends lie in the swathe, for ripening  
winds are these.

All unseemly is slumber at noon for the threshing-  
men ;  
The chaff from the stalks of corn most easily  
parteth then.

Ho, ye reapers, begin when the lark first wakes in  
his nest,  
Cease your toil when he sleepeth, at noon have an  
hour of rest.

The frog hath a jolly life, my lads ; no need there is  
Of a Ganymede for him ; for oceans of drink are  
his.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Miserly steward, boil the lentils ! Better, I ween,  
That, than to cut thy hand a-whittling the cumin  
bean.'

*There* is a song for toilers in the sun !  
Thy starveling love, Bucæus, should be told  
At streak of dawn beside thy mother's bed.

## XI

### POLYPHEMUS' COMPLAINT

NICIAS, there is no other drug on earth,  
Or smeared or sprinkled, that can vanquish love,  
But song alone. Soothing and sweet to men  
Is this remede, albeit hard to find.  
But thou a wise physician art, and dear  
Unto the sacred Nine, and needs must know this.

Our Cyclops Polyphemus here of old  
Found it a sovran soother of his woe,  
When he was sore in love with Galatea,  
And had but early down on chin and temples.  
With neither rose nor apple nor shorn curl  
He courted her, but, mad as mad could be,  
Left every task undone. And oft his flock  
Unshepherded would quit the pastures green  
And seek the fold alone; but he the while  
Would seat him somewhere on the lonely shore,  
Wave-washed and tangle-strewn, and there would  
sing  
At break of day; a very grievous wound,  
Which mighty Aphrodite's shaft had made,  
Deep in his heart; yet gat he healing so.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Sitting aloft upon a mighty stone  
And gazing sea-wards he would carol thus :—  
' Fair Galatea, why my love disdain—  
Thou who art whiter than the curd I strain,  
Soft as a lamb, but frolicsome and free  
As heifer-calf, and brighter far to see  
Than grapes as yet unreddened by the sun.  
Thou stealest towards me when the day is done,  
And I asleep am laid ; but when I wake,  
Away thou speedest, as from out the brake  
A hoary wolf had sprung. I loved thee first  
When but a child thou with my mother durst  
Roam o'er these hills to pluck the hyacinth-  
flower.

I led the way, and since that bygone hour  
When I beheld thee, love hath burned apace.  
What carest thou ? Nothing, I ween. My face  
Affrights thee—one shag eyebrow's lowering dip  
From ear to ear, nose flattened on the lip,  
And one great eye midmost my forehead set.  
Though ugly thus I be, fair maiden ; yet  
A thousand sheep I pasture on these hills,  
Wherefrom the sweetest milk my pitcher fills.  
Summer and fall no lack of cheese is known,  
And in mid-wintertime my cheese-crates groan.  
Sweetly I pipe (no Cyclops pipes like me)  
And sing at dead of night myself and thee.  
Eleven fawns with moon-flecks on the brow,  
And four bear-whelps I foster for thee now.  
Oh, come to me ! The land will give thee more  
Than that green sea which yearns towards the shore.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Sweeter the night shall be in my repair ;  
Laurels and slender cypresses are there,  
And ivy dark and the sweet-fruited vine,  
And water chill which Etna, clad with pine,  
Sends from her white snows everlastingly  
Down to my grot to make a well for me.  
Then who'd prefer the sea to such delights ?  
But if my shaggy hairiness affrights,—  
Well, I have plenteous store of logs of oak,  
And on my hearth a fire no ashes choke.—  
Burn, burn me to the heart and sear my eye ;  
Dear though it is, I'll suffer cheerfully.  
Oh, why at birth were gills and fins not mine ?  
To kiss thy hand I'd leapt into the brine,  
(Thy mouth perchance denied) and brought with  
me  
Red poppy-flowers, or snowdrops white for thee—  
These bloom in Spring-time, those in Summer  
weather ;  
So ne'er could I have offered both together—  
But I will straightway learn me how to swim ;  
Haply a sailor here will come ; from him  
I'll teaching get, and seek what joys may dwell  
Down in the deep that please you all so well.  
Come, Galatea, come, remembering not  
Thy homeward way as I have mine forgot.  
Come, tend the flocks with me and milk the ewes,  
Nor to make cheeses with the curd refuse.  
My mother wrongs me, her alone I blame,  
For ne'er she says a kind word for my flame,  
Yet daily sees me pine for thy sweet sake.—  
Now will I say my head and two feet ache,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

That she may suffer too as well as I.—  
Ah, Cyclops, Cyclops, how thy loose wits fly !  
Go weave thy baskets, cull the grasses green  
And feed thy lambs—'twere better so, I ween.  
Hold what thou hast—why chase what flees away ?  
A fairer sweetheart shalt thou find one day.  
Many the girls that bid me sport by night  
With them in dalliance and love's delight.  
All softly laugh whene'er I list their call.  
On land, methinks, I'm someone after all.'

Thus Polyphemus soothed his aching heart  
With song, nor sought with gold the healer's aid.



## XII

### THE PASSIONATE FRIEND

THOU art come, dear youth, art come ; three  
    nights and days hast thou tarried—  
Alas for the longing of love which makes men old  
    in a day !—  
As a maiden is fairer far than she that hath thrice  
    been married,  
As apples are sweeter than sloes, and sweeter than  
    Winter, May ;  
Swifter a fawn than a calf, ewe's fleece than yean-  
    ling's rarer,  
And the nightingale, shrilly sweet, outsings all  
    birds of the glade ;  
So o'er-gladly I sped towards thee, as a weary  
    farer  
Speeds from the scorching heat to the cool of a  
    beechen shade.

Oh that our hearts be inspired by Love and by  
    Love's own Brother !  
That thus we twain may be sung by men in the  
    after-days :  
' On a time two godlike youths abode the one with  
    the other  
As ' Leader ' that men of Amyclæ, and ' Lad ' that  
    Thessalians praise ;

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

And the yoke of their hearts was level, the  
manners of men were golden,  
For the lover was dear to the boy in the days that  
are no more.'  
To the gods who wax not old may *I* be for that  
beholden,  
And this may I hear long hence on the un-  
releasing shore :  
'How thou did'st love, and how thy darling did  
truly love thee,  
Is a song on the lips of all men, and chiefly of  
youths unwed.'  
But are not the lords of these things the heavenly  
gods above thee,  
Who will rule it e'en as they will? Howbeit, let  
this be said :  
'Fair boy, though I praise thy sweetness, my  
brow will not blister with lying,  
For when thou hast done me a hurt, thou straight-  
way healest me,  
And when with a fierce desire at thy feet my heart  
is dying,  
I have risen with double guerdon and more than  
a lover's fee.'

Sons of Megarian Nisus, O ye who excel in rowing,  
At ease may ye live, for ye praised above all your  
Athenian guest,  
Him who died for his friend when the tide of war  
was flowing,  
Diocles, lover of boyhood, who hearkened to  
Love's behest !

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

And ever in early Spring the lads at his tomb are  
thronging  
Eager the honours to gain that a best of kisses  
earns ;  
For the boy whose lips are pressed on lips with the  
tenderest longing,  
Covered with wreaths of flowers to his joyful  
mother returns.  
Happy is he that awards the prize to a kiss, or  
refuses,  
And thus, methinks, will he pray to the bright-  
eyed Ganymede :  
' My mouth be as Lydian stone which the money-  
changer uses  
To sever the glittering wile from coin that is gold  
indeed ! '

### XIII

#### THE RAPE OF HYLAS

Not, as we dreamt of yore, lived Eros for us alone,  
He whom his mother bore to a god—to a god  
unknown ;

Nay, nor are we the first that have Beauty clearly  
seen,  
My Nicias ; not so durst frail sons of a moment  
ween.

The son of Amphitryon, too, the hero of stubborn  
heart,

Albeit the lion he slew, was fired with a passionate  
smart.

For Hylas fair and sweet, with his ringlets blowing  
wild,

Whom he led in all things meet as a father a  
darling child,—

All things comely and strong whereby he himself  
had won

Fame of immortal song and all men's benison.

Ne'er would he leave his Love, not at midnight's  
fiery time,

Nor when to the heavens above the coursers of  
Morning climb,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Nor yet when to roost and dream the cheeping  
chick upsprings,  
And aloft on the dusky beam the mother-hen flaps  
her wings,  
That so the beloved boy to his mind should  
fashioned be,  
And sharing his yoke in joy wax mighty in mastery.  
And when for the fleece of gold with the son of  
Æson sailed  
A muster of chieftains bold by many a city hailed,  
The son of Alcmena came to Iolchus' wealthy  
town—  
Alcmena of Midean name, that lady of high  
renown—  
And Hylas came with him there to the good ship  
Argo's side.  
(As an eagle cleaves the air, 'tween the rocks that  
clashed in the tide  
Safely she sped on her way to the Phasian river  
deep,  
And the rocks which clashed that day ever since  
unmoved sleep.)  
And now that the Pleiads glow, and to pasture  
in far-off fields  
Already the lambkins go, and the spring to the  
summer yields,  
The heroes, in heavenly bloom, bethink them of  
seafaring,  
And gather in Argo's womb, and their sail to the  
breezes fling.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Three days the south wind blew and bore them  
along on its breath,  
And onward the good ship flew where the Helles-  
pont thundereth ;  
Then down on Propontic sand the ropes were flung  
from the stern,  
Anigh that wide-furrowed land the Cician steers  
upturn.  
Forth on the shore they leapt, and orderly sight  
the feast  
At sunset ; and after, they slept together the best  
and the least.  
For before them lay a mead, and leading therein  
without fail,  
And they cut thin flowering-reed and low-lying  
galingale ;  
And the fair-haired Hylas ran for water to mix  
with the wine  
Of Telamon, dauntless man, and Heracles half-  
divine—  
At the board those comrade kings ever sat them  
side by side—  
A brazen pitcher swings in his hand, and soon he  
espied  
A tarn in a lowly dell ; thick rushes about it grew,  
The swallow-wort's purple bell and maiden-hair  
pale of hue,  
And parsley lush and fair and many a marsh-born  
thing.  
In the midst of the water there the nymphs were  
gambolling,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Sleepless naiads three, whom the awe-struck yokel  
flies,  
Malis and Eunice, and Nychea with Spring in her  
eyes.  
As the boy held over the brink his water-jar wide  
of lip,  
Letting it down to drink, his hand was held in  
their grip ;  
For a passion in each young heart for the Argive  
stripling fair  
Had roused them with sudden smart ; and into  
the dark pool there  
Headlong down slipped he, as a red star slips from  
the sky  
Headlong into the sea—and the mariner will cry :  
' Ho, lads ! shorten sail, for a stiff breeze soon will  
blow.'  
Gently the well-nymphs hale the lad and lay him  
alow  
On their knees, and assuage his tears with loving  
words and mild ;  
But Heracles' heart had fears, and was troubled  
sore for the child.  
Over his shoulder he slipped his trusty Scythian  
bow,  
With his mighty hand he gripped the club that he  
ne'er let go,  
And away he sped, and twice and again from his  
deep throat cried :  
' Hylas ! ' . . . and Hylas thrice heard, and in vain  
replied.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

From out the crystal spring the voice came faint  
on the ear,  
And the cry had a far-off ring, albeit so close anear.  
As a manèd lion bounds from his lair, a devouring  
beast,  
When the bleat of a hill-fawn sounds as a call  
to the ready feast,  
E'en so did the son of the god roam seeking his  
darling lost,  
Through acanthus-wastes untrod; and many a  
region he crossed.  
Lovers are hard to quell; yea, measureless toil  
was his lot,  
As he ranged o'er brake and fell, and Jason was  
clean forgot.  
And Argo's sail in the breeze still fluttered, the  
heroes abode  
Waiting for Heracles, and at night the sail they  
stowed.  
At the will of his wandering feet he roamed with a  
frenzied heart  
Whose core was rent with the heat of the cruel  
goddess's dart.  
Thus Hylas the fair was ta'en to the ranks of the  
Blest that day,  
And the heroes in harsh disdain called Heracles  
'Runaway';  
For he sped from Argo then with her thirty  
benches of oars  
Afoot to the Colchian men and to Phasis' cruel  
shores.



## XIV

### THE SLIGHTED LOVER

ÆSCHINES

Ha, friend Thyonichus, good day !

THYONICHUS

Good day,

Æschines ! What a stranger you are !

ÆSCHINES

I am

A stranger indeed.

THYONICHUS

Why, what has been the matter ?

ÆSCHINES

Things have been going rather ill with me,  
Thyonichus.

THYONICHUS

Ah, that is why you're lean,  
Your upper lip untrimmed, and love-locks dry.  
Only the other day in plight like yours  
A wan-faced adept of Pythagoras  
Bare-footed this way came—an Athenian born,  
He said—in love he too, methinks, and pining . . .  
For a loaf of bread !

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

ÆSCHINES

You'll ever have your jest,  
My friend ; but me the fair Cynisca flouts,  
And one day I shall suddenly go mad.  
Indeed, I'm but a hair's-breadth from it now.

THYONICHUS

It's ever thus with you, dear Æschines ;  
A touch too keen, you would have everything  
Upon the instant. What's the story now ?

ÆSCHINES

I and the Argive, the Thessalian rider  
Apis, and Cleonicus, man-at-arms,  
Were drinking at my farm, and I had killed  
Two pullets and a sucking-pig, and broached  
My four-year Biblian wine for them ; it smelt  
As fragrant as it had but left the vat.  
Truffles and scallops and snails were served to us ;  
It was a jolly wassail ; and the mirth  
Was waxing gaily, when the fancy took us  
To bid the unmixed wine to be poured forth  
For each to pledge his Love ; but each must name  
The toast. We named, and duly drained the cup ;  
But nought said *she*, though I myself was there.  
How think you I felt then ? Then one in jest  
Said : ' Are you tongue-tied ? Have you met a  
wolf ? ' <sup>1</sup>  
Quoth she : ' Well guessed,' and blushed ; one  
could with ease

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the superstition that if one met a wolf, and it saw one before one saw *it*, one became dumb.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Have lit a lamp then at her face. Alas !  
There is a Wolf, a Wolf there is, the son  
Of neighbour Labes, Lycus, tall and smooth,  
Deemed fair by many ; for *his* noble sake,  
Her heart was pining. And a breath of this  
Once murmured in my ear, but I, poor fool,  
Sifted the matter not, shame on my beard !  
And now deep in our cups were we four men,  
When for mere wantonness the Larissæan  
Raised the Thessalian catch ' My wolf,' and sang  
From first to finish ; and Cynisca wept  
All of a sudden hotter tears than weeps  
Beside her mother's knee a six-year maid  
That would be lifted on her mother's lap.  
Then I (you know my humour) with clenched fist  
Struck her upon the temple once, and once  
Again, and gathering up her robes she fled  
Away on the instant. ' Plague of my life,' I cried,  
' Do *I* not please you ? Does some dearer one  
Lie on your breast ? Begone with you and cherish  
Some other lover ; 'tis for him your tears,  
Harlot, are flowing.' As the mother swallow,  
When she has brought a morsel to her brood  
Beneath the eaves, darts forth to seek for more,  
Even swifter from her settle darted she  
Straight through the vestibule and folding-doors  
In random race. An ancient proverb runs :  
' Bull fled, bull sped.' Now twenty days have  
    passed  
And eight and nine and other ten besides, . .  
To-day's the eleventh, add two more—two months

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Have flown since we two parted, and my hair  
Has not been shorn even in the Thracian way.  
Now Wolf is all in all to her ; to Lycus  
Her door's ajar by night ; of none account  
Am I, not in the reckoning now, but like  
The poor Megarians, in the lowest place.  
And could I cease to love, then all were well ;  
But how can this be done ? The mouse of the  
adage  
Has pawed the pitch, my friend, and what remede  
For desperate love there be I know not. Yet  
I know that Simus, smitten with desire  
For Epichalcus' daughter, sailed away  
And came back whole—a friend of mine own years.  
I too will o'er the sea and be a soldier,  
Better, or worse, than some, but good as most.

THYONICHUS

Would your desires had been more fortunate,  
My Æschines ! But if you must abroad,  
The best pay-master for a free-born man  
Is Ptolemy.

ÆSCHINES

And what is he besides,  
Your ' best pay-master for a free-born man ' ?

THYONICHUS

A kindly man, a friend of art and song,  
A lover, and the pink of courtesy ;  
A man that knows his friend, his enemy

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Still better, giving largess unto many,  
And ne'er refusing to a suppliant  
Aught that a king should grant. But, Æschines,  
We must not always ask. So, if you like  
On your right shoulder the cloak's tip to pin,  
And standing firm will boldly bear the brunt  
Of sturdy targeteers, away to Egypt !  
We all get grizzled from the temples downward,  
And frosty age creeps slowly to the chin.  
Come, let's be doing while our legs are young !

XV

GORG0 AND PRAXIN0E

GORG0 (*putting her head in at the door*)  
Praxinoë in ?

PRAXIN0E

Oh, there you are at last,  
Dear Gorgo ! Yes, I'm in. I'm quite surprised  
To see you here at all. Quick, Eunoë, fetch  
A chair for my friend, and put a cushion on it.

GORG0

Nay, leave it as it is.

PRAXIN0E

Well, sit you down.

GORG0

Oh dear, how faint I feel ! I hardly got  
To your house alive out of the dreadful crush  
Of chariots and of people. Soldiers' boots  
And cloaks here, there, and everywhere—I thought  
The way would never end. Your house, my dear,  
Is really much too far away from ours.

PRAXIN0E

My silly husband's fault ! He came and took  
At world's-end here a beast's lair, not a house,—  
Merely to keep us apart, the jealous wretch !  
And all for spite, as usual.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

GORG0

Hush, my dear !

Don't rail at Dinon so before the child.

Look, woman, how he eyes you ! Never mind,  
Zopyrion dear, sweet boy, it's not papa  
That mother talks of.

PRAXINOE

By our Lady Goddess,

The baby understands us !

GORG0

Pretty papa !

PRAXINOE

Well, that papa of his the other day—

We always say ' the other day ' you know—

Went to the shop to buy me soda and rouge,  
And brought me salt instead, the hulking oaf !

GORG0

My spendthrift husband is another such.

Five ' fleeces ' (Heaven save the mark !) he bought,  
For five-and-thirty drachmas yesterday—  
Dogskins, old wallet-shreds, mere trash and  
trouble.

But come, put on your mantle and your gown,  
And let's be off to Ptolemy's palace-hall  
To see the ' Adonis.' It is said the queen  
Is planning something splendid.

PRAXINOE

' All is rich

In rich men's houses.'

GORG0

Think what a tale you'll have  
For those that have not seen the show. Now  
come,  
It's time to move.

PRAXINOE

'Tis ever holiday  
With idlers.' Eunoë, gather up the yarn,  
You good-for-nothing dawdler. 'Lazy cats  
Are fond of mats.' Come now, bestir yourself  
And bring me water ; water's what I want  
First—and she brings me soap ! Well, give it  
me—  
Not too much, glutton ! Now, then, pour. You  
wretch !  
My smock is drenched—stop !—Well, my wash-  
ing's done  
As Heaven pleased. Now, where's the coffer-key ?  
Bring it me here.

GORG0

That full gown suits you well,  
Praxinoë. How much did it cost you straight  
From off the loom ?

PRAXINOE

Oh, don't remind me, Gorgo—  
More than two good white minas, and I spent  
My soul in stitching.

GORG0

It's a great success !



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

PRAXINOE

I warrant you ! Girl, bring my cloak and set  
My straw hat nicely on my head.—*No*, child,  
I will *not* take you. Boo, the horsie bites !  
Oh, cry your fill, I will not have you lamed.—  
Let us be moving ! Phrygia, take the boy  
And play with him, call in the dog and shut  
The outer door.

---

Good Heavens, what a crowd !  
How *shall* we elbow through it all ? They're like  
A swarm of countless ants. O Ptolemy,  
Many the glorious deeds that you have done  
Since when your sire was numbered with the gods !  
No rascals now skulk up, in the Egyptian way,  
To maul the passer-by, as once they did,  
The lumps of villainy, the knavish tricksters,  
All 'birds of a feather'—scoundrels one and all.  
Oh, Gorgo, dear, what *will* become of us ?  
Here are the king's own chargers.—My good man,  
Don't tread on me !—That chestnut's rearing up,  
Oh, see how fierce it is ! Run, Eunoe, hussy,  
Run ! it will kill its leader. What a blessing  
The babe's at home !

GORGO

Cheer up, Praxinoë, dear ;  
They've passed us now, and gone to their proper  
place.

PRAXINOE

So have my wits. But ever since a child

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Horses and chilly snakes have been my dread.  
Oh, let's make haste; the crowd is almost on us.  
Come you from court, good mother?

OLD WOMAN

Ay, my dears.

GORG0

Is entrance easy?

OLD WOMAN

‘The Achæans came,  
By trying, into ‘Troy town,’ pretty lass;  
‘Venture and win!’

GORG0

Off goes Dame Oracle!

PRAXINOE

‘Women know everything—yes, even how  
Zeus wedded Hera.’

GORG0

Oh, Praxinoë, look,  
Look at the swarm of folk about the doors!

PRAXINOE

Terrible! Gorgo, dear, give me your hand,  
And, Eunoë, you take Eutyichis’, and mind her—  
No straggling—let us all get in together!  
Oh, Eunoë, Eunoë, do stick close to us!  
Alack, now there’s my wimple torn in two!  
Sir, as you hope for happiness, mind my cloak!

STRANGER

I scarcely can, but I will do my best.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

PRAXINOE

Oh, what a crush ! They jostle like pigs.

STRANGER

Cheer up,

Madam ; we're all right now.

PRAXINOE

I hope that things

Will be ' all right ' for ever and a day  
With you, dear Sir, for shielding us !—What a good  
Kind man !—Oh, there's poor Eunoë being  
squashed !

Push, silly, push ! That's right ! ' Now all are  
in.'

As the groomsman said when locking in the bride.

---

GORGON

Oh, come and look first at those fancy gowns !  
How lovely and delicate ! Robes for goddesses !

PRAXINOE

I wonder who the weaving-women were,  
And who the draughtsmen that so deftly drew  
These figures ! How like life they stand and  
move !

People, not pictures ! ' Wonderful is man !'  
And there Adonis lies so fair to see  
Upon his silver couch, youth's early down  
On the tender cheek of him, the thrice-belov'd,  
Dear both to us and those that dwell below !

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

ANOTHER STRANGER

Oh, stop your chatter there, you turtle-doves!—  
Their Doric drawl will be the death of one!

GORG0

Heav'ns! where came *this* man from? What's  
that to you

If chatterers we are? Go and buy slaves  
And bully *them*! Ordering *us* about!—  
Ladies of Syracuse, whose forebears came  
From Corinth, mark you! like Bellerophon.  
We talk as folks do in the Peloponnese,  
And why should Dorians not speak Doric, pray?

PRAXINOË

Persephone! no master will I have  
But *one*—so, there! 'Don't try your flummery  
here!'

GORG0

Hush, hush, Praxinoë, dear! The Argive girl,  
That clever songstress is about to sing  
The Adonis lay. (Last year she won the prize  
For dirges.) She will sing it well, I know.  
Look! she is putting on her languid airs.

SINGING WOMAN

'Lady of Golgoi, Idalion and Eryx' lofty steep,  
Thou that toiest with gold, Aphrodite, goddess,  
lo!

In this twelfth month of the year from Acheron's  
ageless flow  
The soft-footed Hours have brought Adonis from  
the deep.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Tardy goddesses they, the boon Hours, yea but  
blest

They come to us, ever bringing to mortals pleasure  
and ache.

Cypris, child of Dione, men say that thou did'st  
make

Berenice, a mortal, immortal and fill with ambrosia  
her breast.

O thou who by many a name art hailed in many a  
shrine,

This day Berenice's daughter, the queen  
Arsinoë,

Decketh Adonis with all things lovely in honour  
of thee—

Arsinoë fair as Helen, as Helen of race divine.

Beside him from each tree taken is lying a  
fruitage sweet,

And tussocks of tender plants in caskets of silver  
are there,

Golden boxes of Syrian balsam, and dainties rare  
Moulded on platters by girls from the snowy  
meal of wheat.

Honey is mingled therein, or oil, or many a flower,  
And the shapes are as birds and beasts ; little Loves  
are fluttering

Like new-fledged nightingales flitting from spray to  
spray on the wing,

And covered with delicate anise is every green-  
arched bower.

Oh the ebony, oh the gold, and the eagles  
fashionèd

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Of ivory white, which bear unto Cronides his  
Love.

The Darling who fills his cup ! Oh hangings of  
purple above !

“ Softer than sleep ” Miletan and Samian shep-  
herds had said.

Anear him a couch is dight for the lovely Cyprian  
Queen,

On another Adonis is lying and rosy-armed is he ;  
Soft is the down on his lip, and soft will his kisses  
be,

For scarcely a score of years hath the youthful  
bridegroom seen.

Farewell to thee now, dear Cypris ! Enjoy thy  
love. On the morrow

At dewy dawn we shall meet together and bear him  
away

To the waves that foam on the beach, and with  
tresses in disarray,

And robes to our ankles dropped, bare-bosomed  
we'll sing our sorrow.

Alone of sons of the gods this boon hath Adonis  
earned,

From Acheron hither to wend ; not this Aga-  
memnon won,

Nor Ajax, mighty in wrath, nor Hecuba's first-  
born son,

Nor yet Patroclus, nor Pyrrhus, though safe from  
Troy he returned,

No, nor the Lapithæ, no, nor the sons of Deucalion  
of yore,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Nor Pelops' children, nor Argos' praise, the  
Pelasgian men.

Be gracious to-day, Adonis, and next year bless  
us again ;

For welcome thy coming now and hereafter as  
heretofore.'

### GORGON

'There's nought so clever as a woman,' dear,  
How happy she must be to know so much,  
And happier still to have so sweet a voice !  
Let's homeward now ! My good-man's dinner-  
less,

And when he's hungry he's all vinegar ;  
Approach him not ! Farewell, belov'd Adonis !  
And welfare still be ours at thy return !

## XVI

### THE POET'S PLEA

EVER a care is this to the daughters of Zeus and to  
minstrels,  
Duly the deathless gods to renown and the glory  
of heroes.  
Muses are goddesses, yea, and goddesses hymn the  
divine Ones ;  
Children of earth are we, let mortals sing but of  
mortals.

Ah, but of those that now dwell under the glimmer  
of morning  
Who that will ope his door and joyfully offer my  
Poems  
Home in his house, nor send them away from the  
gate unguerdoned ?  
Wroth to me then they return, feet bare, and  
sorely revile me,  
Saying a profitless road they went ; and again they  
will seat them  
Down in the coffer's void, with their heads on their  
shivering knees bowed,  
Fearfully waiting there where aye their accustomed  
abode is,  
Each time they from a quest found vain come  
back disappointed.



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Who will to-day be a friend to the singer that  
hymns his praises ?

*I* know not ; for men no longer desire as afore-  
time

Glory for noble deeds ; but Money is monarch  
and master.

Each man keepeth his hand on the purse in his  
robe's bosom, seeking

Chances of silver and gold, and would offer to  
none as a guerdon

Even a scraping of rust, but would utter his ready  
rejoinders :—

‘ Closer is knee than shin ! ’ ‘ Self first ! ’ ‘ Heaven  
cares for the poets.’

‘ Homer's enough for us all, and who would  
hearken another ? ’

‘ Best of the bards is he that wants no part of my  
substance.’

Fools, what gain is a world of wealth in your  
houses lying ?

Wise men deem that in *that* dwells not true  
pleasure of riches,

Nay, but in this—to impart some share of your  
wealth to a minstrel,

Favours done to a host of kinsmen and many a  
stranger—

Off'rings piously made to the gods on their altars  
alway—

Aye to be kind to a guest, and first at your board  
to regale him,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Ere he be sped on his way, what time he desire to  
be going—  
This above all—to revere the appointed priests  
of the Muses,  
So that a goodly renown ye may have in the dark-  
ness of Hades,  
Yea, nor inglorious weep by Acheron's ice-chill  
waters,  
Like unto beggarly men with palms made hard  
by the mattock,  
Wailing the luckless lot which came from their  
fathers aforetime.

Monthly to many a thrall in the courts of the  
kingly Aleuas  
Duly a dole was made, and many the calves that  
were driven  
Lowling along with the kine to the stalls of the  
sons of Scopas ;  
Many a chosen flock on the pastures of Crannon  
wandered  
Under the skies each day for the bountiful children  
of Creon ;  
Yet no pleasure therein had they when their souls  
were wafted  
Down to that ample barge upon Acheron's  
loathèd waters.  
All that wealth forgone, they had lain forgotten  
of all men  
Ever and evermore with the rest of the pitiful  
dead folk,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Had not a Cean bard, that wondrous and  
changeeful singer,  
Wed to the varying tones of his harp their names  
as a glory  
Told to a later race, and yielded a measure of  
honour  
E'en to their fleet-foot steeds that back from the  
sacred contests  
Came to them crowned with flow'rs. Ay, who  
would have heard of the Lycian  
Chiefs, or the long-haired sons of Priam or  
beautiful Cyncus  
White as a maid, had bards not sung of the bygone  
battles ?  
Yea, and Odysseus too, who was roaming a score  
and a hundred  
Months amid all strange folk, and came unto  
utmost Hades  
Scatheless, and scatheless fled from the den of the  
terrible Cyclops,  
Hardly had won him a lasting renown ; his  
faithful swineherd  
Clean forgotten had lain, and he who abode by  
the cattle ;  
Yea, and unknown had died Laërtes valorous-  
hearted,  
Had the Ionian man not told in a song of their  
labours.

Only the Muses grant unto mortals a guerdon of  
glory.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Dead men's wealth shall be spent by the quick  
that are heirs to their riches ;

But 'twere as easy a task on the shore of the ocean  
to number

Waves of the grey-green sea that a wind may  
drive to the beaches,

Ay, or to wash from a brick its dirt in the wave of a  
crystal

River, as move that man whom hunger for pelf  
hath stricken.

Farewell such ! May their hoards of gold and  
silver be endless,

Yea, and a craving lust for more be their master for  
ever !

I would rather choose to be honoured and loved  
of my fellows

Far than be lord of droves unnumbered of mules  
and of horses.

Therefore I seek for him that will joyfully give  
me a welcome,

Me and the Muses.—Rough are the ways of the  
world unto minstrels

Reft of the daughters of Zeus who alone is mighty  
in counsel.

Never is Heaven tired of bringing the years and  
the seasons,

Oft shall the car of the Sun speed onward whirled  
by the coursers,

Yea, and a man shall yet be desirous of me as his  
minstrel,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

He who hath like things done as Ajax wroth or  
Achilles

Wrought on Simoïs' meads by the grave of the  
Phrygian Ilus.

Lo, already the men from the East that dwell on  
the utmost

Spur of the Libyan land, not far from the sunset,  
are shaken ;

Ay, and already the men of Sicily poise their  
lances,

Bearing upon their shoulder the weight of their  
bucklers of willow.

Like to the mighty of old great Hiero standeth  
among them,

Girt for the fray, and his horse-hair plumes  
o'ershadow his helmet.

Zeus, thou Father of all Most High, and Lady  
Athena,

Thou, Persephone, too, who art like thy mother  
in friending

That rich Ephyran town by the waters of Lysim-  
eleia,

Oh that an evil fate may drive from the shores of  
our island

O'er Sardinian waves but a tithe of the host of  
our foemen,

So they may tell to the wives and children the  
doom of their dear ones !

Oh for their ancient lords to abide once more in  
the cities

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Here by the hands of the foe erewhile so  
grievously wasted !

Tilled be the fertile fields, and the sheep in many a  
thousand,

Fatted with pasture, bleat on the plains, and the  
kine to the steading

Gather—a sign for the man that fares in the  
gloaming to hasten !

Ploughed be the fallow field for the seed, what time  
the cicala,

Watching the shepherds toil in the open, shrills  
from the tree-tops !

Then let spiders weave their gossamer webs on  
the armour,

Yea, and the name itself of battle for ever be  
silenced !

But let bards uplifting the praise of Hiero, waft it  
Over the Scythian sea, and where, in the dimness  
of ages,

Queenly Semiramis raised her a rampart sodered  
with asphalt !

I am but one of the many belov'd of the daughters  
of Heaven.

Oh for them all to be fain to renown the Sicilian  
well-spring,

Fount Arethusa, our folk, and Hiero, glory of  
spearmen !

O ye Graces, dear to Eteocles, ye who befriended  
Minyan Orchomenus (so hated of yore by the  
Thebans,).

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Ne'er, if unasked, will I stir ; but gladly to those  
that entreat me  
I and my Muses will come, nor yet shall I ever  
abandon  
You, ye Graces.—Apart from the Graces nothing  
is lovely  
Here in the world of men.—May I ever abide with  
the Graces !

## XVII

### THE PRAISES OF PTOLEMY

To Zeus, O Muses, first and latest praise,  
When we to Heaven's King would lift our lays ;  
To Ptolemy, first, last, and midmost, when  
We sing the praises of the king of men !

The deeds of demi-gods in olden time  
*Gat aye the guerdon of a minstrel's rime.*  
I'll sing of Ptolemy,—a minstrel I—  
Song is the meed for gods who never die.

When unto Ida many-forested  
A woodman cometh, he is hard be-sted,  
And gazes round on all that wealth of wood,  
Uncertain where to try his lustihood.—  
What first to hymn amid the countless things  
Wherewith Zeus glorifies the king of kings ?

How great to accomplish mighty deeds was he,  
That high-born son of Lagus, Ptolemy,  
    \* \* t his spirit had conceived a plan  
        ie wisdom of a lesser man !



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

'Twas his from Zeus an equal place to hold  
With that of deities ; his throne of gold  
Is built in Heaven, and graciously anigh  
Sits Alexander, dread Divinity  
To Persians with their caps of varied hue.  
Fronting him sits Alcides—he who slew  
The centaurs—on a throne from adamant wrung.  
There revels he the heavenly gods among,  
Much joying in his latest heritage  
Of children whom Zeus made exempt from age,  
And glad his sons are hailed as deities.  
(For through a later child of Heracles,  
Stalwart Caranus, both can trace their line  
To Heracles, their founder half-divine.)  
When from the heavenly banquet and carouse,  
He seeks the love-bower of his youthful spouse,  
His quiver and his bow he's wont to place  
In Alexander's hands, and gives his mace,  
Rough-knobbed and iron-bound, to Ptolemy ;  
And these twain straightway bear him company  
Unto white-ankled Hebe's blest abode,  
The armour-bearers of the demi-god.

How 'mong the women that were wise of heart  
Shone Berenice, famed for every art !—  
A boon to him who gat her, her who bore  
Dione's child, who rules the Cyprian shore,  
On that sweet bosom pressed her gentle hands,  
And so men say that never in all lands  
Did woman please her lord as much as she  
Was dear unto her husband Ptolemy.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Yet even more belov'd was he again.  
Unto his children may a man give then  
Lightly the care of all his livelihood,  
When wife and husband love as lovers should.  
But loveless wives a stranger aye desire,  
With ease have children, but unlike their 'sire'!

Goddess of beauty, Aphrodite, Queen,  
Thy care was she, and by thy grace I ween  
Fair Berenice crossed not Acheron,  
That wailful water, but or e'er she won  
Unto the sombre-coloured barge's side,  
Whereon the souls of dead folk o'er the tide  
By that aye-loathèd ferryman are ta'en,  
To set her in a temple thou wert fain,  
And honours like thy very own to give;  
And now she gently breathes on all that live  
Loves that are gentle, and the pining heart  
She graciously will ease of every smart.

Dark-eyebrowed girl of Argos, thou did'st bear  
The warrior Diomedes as 'Tydeus' heir—  
Who erst was called the man of Calydon—  
Deep-girdled Thetis bare a warrior son  
To Peleus, son of Æacus—his name,  
Achilles, javelin-thrower rich in fame,  
And she who was the wondering world's desire  
Bore thee, a warrior, to a warrior sire.

On thy first morning, Cos with fostering hand  
Received thee from thy mother on her land—

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

For there the daughter of Antigone  
In throes of labour cried aloud on thee,  
O Ilithyia, girdle-loosener ;  
And graciously thou camest unto her,  
Shedding release from pain in every limb.  
And so a son was born most like to him  
Who gat him. Cos beheld the babe with joy,  
And thus she spake, holding the infant boy :  
' Child, be thou blest, and grant me such renown  
As Phœbus gave to Delos with her crown  
Of azure sheen, and give Triopion's hill,  
With all its Dorian folk, the same goodwill  
As from Apollo on Rhenæa beamed.'  
This spake the Isle and thrice an eagle screamed  
From clouds on high, bird-seer of future things,  
A sign, methinks, from Zeus ; for dreaded kings  
Are Zeus's care ; and most is that one great  
Whom at his birth Zeus loves ; on him shall wait  
Much wealth ; wide sea and land his rule shall own.  
On many a field by many a folk is grown  
The corn which waxes with the heaven-sent rain ;  
But none is fruitful as the Egyptian plain,  
When Nile upon the levels cometh down  
In flood ; so many cities, of renown  
For cunning craftsmen, hath no other land—  
Therein three centuries of cities stand,  
And eke three thousand and three myriad,  
Twice three, and thereunto thrice nine more add ;  
And o'er them all brave Ptolemy bears sway.  
The frontier of his empire shears away  
Phœnician lands, parts of Arabia,  
Syria, Libya and swart Africa.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

O'er all Pamphylians, and Cilicians  
Who poise the spear, Lycians, and Carians  
Whom war delights, he rules, and his behest  
The Cyclads hear ; for his ships are the best  
That sail the deep ; the whole earth and the sea  
And sounding rivers wait on Ptolemy.  
And many a horseman, many a targeteer  
Around him moves in shining brazen gear.  
His wealth could whelm the treasures of all kings,—  
Each day such riches to his palace brings  
From far and near. At ease men ply their trades,  
For never foot of foe the Nile invades,  
That teeming flood, nor e'er hath alien band  
Cried ' havoc ' in the hamlets of the land.  
No mailed warrior from a fleet ship's side  
Hath ever leaped on our sea-borders wide  
To drive Egyptian kine ; so strong is he  
Whose throne is in the broad plains, Ptolemy,  
The fair-haired king, well skilled to wield the lance  
And ward his father's wealth from evil chance,  
As fits a noble sovereign. He himself  
Adds to the store ; nor, like the heaped-up pelf  
Of toilsome ants, doth his gold useless lie  
In treasuries, but ever bounteously  
With first-fruits and all other offerings  
In Heaven's fair shrines is laid, and mighty kings,  
Cities and friends therefrom large guerdon get ;  
And never hath a clear-voiced singer yet,  
Well skilled to raise a ditty musical,  
Come here to Bacchus' holy festival,  
But gotten for his art a worthy fee.  
The Muses' ministers hymn Ptolemy

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Why not have suffered the maid to play with the  
    maids by her mother  
At the glimmer of early dawn ? For thine shall  
    the bride be now,  
To-morrow and yet to-morrow, while one year  
    follows another.  
O Menelaus, a husband blest above all art  
    thou !  
Surely a Heaven-sent man sneezed luck on thy  
    coming here  
To Sparta, where other chiefs came wooing, and  
    thou didst win.  
To thee alone of the heroes will Zeus be a father  
    dear,  
For the daughter of Zeus now lieth with thee one  
    bed within.—  
She who is peerless of women that walk the Grecian  
    land—  
And a wondrous child shall be yours if it bear its  
    mother's face.  
All of an age are we who beside our river-strand  
Together, with limbs oiled man-wise, run by the  
    bathing-place—  
Seven score and a hundred girls, fresh blossom of  
    youthful maids ;—  
But none of us e'er could vie with Helen in loveli-  
    ness.  
As rising Dawn shows fair, or Night with her star-  
    lit shades,  
Or Spring-time shining forth in the slack of the  
    Winter stress,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

E'en so did the golden Helen amongst us maidens  
gleam.

As a corn-crop rich is the pride of a fertile field  
of loam,

Of a garden the cypress-tree, of a car the Thessalian  
team,

E'en so is the rose-red Helen the grace of her  
Spartan home.

Not another can spin such yarn as she unwinds  
from the scuttle,

None can a closer warp cut off from the loom-  
beams high,

When the threads have been cunningly woven  
thereon with the nimble shuttle,

And none can strike the lyre with a hand as  
masterly,

When she hymns broad-bosomed Athene and  
virginal Artemis ;

None are as Helen whose eyes the abode of all  
Loves be.

Girl most fair and sweet, a wife art thou by this.  
At morn to the running-place and the grassy

mead shall we,  
We shall go to pluck us a crown of fragrant

blossoms, and oft,  
Oft shall we think of thee, dear Helen, as all in

vain  
A yearning yearns for the teat of his dam. We  
shall hang aloft

A chaplet of trailing lotus for thee on a leafy  
plane,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

And taking the athlete's oil that is held in a silver  
cruse,

Under the leafy plane we shall pour it forth for  
thee,

And words shall be cut on the bark in the way the  
Dorians use,

For the passer-by to read, "Bow down, I am  
Helen's tree."

Farewell!—and farewell, thou whose bride is from  
Heaven above!

May Leto, mother of youths, grant children, many  
a one.

And Cypris, the goddess, yield you the joy of an  
equal love,

And Zeus give limitless wealth from noble father  
to son!

Slumber and breathe forth love and desire in each  
other's breast;

But mind ye be stirring at dawn; for at dawn  
we'll come this way

When the first cock shrills as he raises his feathery  
neck from his rest.

O Hymen, warder of wedlock, be glad of this  
bridal day!

## XIX

### EROS AND THE BEE

THE love-god on a day  
Wandered the hives among  
To steal a comb away,  
And by a bee was stung ;

And all his finger-tips  
Tingle, and with his lips  
Blowing his hand, he skips  
And stamps upon the lea.

To Cypris then he hied,  
And showed the cruel sting,  
And bitterly he cried :  
' How can so small a thing

Raise such a mighty ache ? '  
His mother, laughing, spake :  
' Thyself, though small, can'st make  
Like havoc as the bee ! '



## XX

### THE YOKEL AND THE LIGHT-O'-LOVE

WHEN I would kiss Eunice, loud laughed she,  
And taunting cried : ' You boor, begone from  
me !

You'd kiss me, wretch ?—I cannot kiss a clown—  
No lips press I but such as hail from town.  
To touch my dainty mouth you shall not dare,  
Not even in your dreams.—Your eyes but stare !  
Gross is your speech, and coarse your playfulness !—  
What winning words, what delicate address,  
How soft your beard, how fine your hair !—Alack !  
Your lips are sickly-wan, your hands are black,  
And evil is your smell. Away from me !  
'Taint not the air I breathe.'

So saying, she  
Thrice in her bosom spat, and looked askance,  
Eyeing me head to foot with steady glance ;  
And shooting out her lips she laughed aloud,  
The sneering hussy, insolent and proud.  
My blood boiled up, and crimson waxed my hue  
Under the smart, as doth a rose with dew.  
Away she fled. With rage my soul is torn  
That such a wanton should my beauty scorn.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Shepherds, am I not fair ? Speak sooth to me.  
Hath some god made me other, suddenly ?  
A charm once blossomed round me, beautiful  
As ivy round a stem ; my beard was full ;  
Like parsley on my temples curled my hair,  
And o'er swart eyebrows gleamed my forehead  
fair ;

My eyes were brighter than Athene's eyne,  
Softer than curded milk this mouth of mine,  
My speech more honied than the honey-flow.  
Sweetly to sing, sweetly to play I know  
Shawm, pan-pipe, reed or fife, whiche'er I will.  
That I am fair all women on the hill  
Confess, and kiss me. But that city *she*,  
She kissed me not, but ran away from me !

Hath she not heard how Bacchus drives along  
His heifers through the dells, nor learned from  
song

How once in days gone by the Cyprian Queen  
On Phrygian hills a shepherdess was seen ;  
And how she maddened for a herdsman's sake,  
And kissed and wailed Adonis in the brake ?

What was Endymion, too, Selene's flame ?  
What but a hind ? And yet from heaven she  
came

To Latmos' vale to share a herd-boy's bed.  
A swain thou weapest, Rhea ; and 'tis said  
That for a pretty lad who drove a herd  
The son of Cronos roamed a wanton bird.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Alone of all, Eunice will not love  
A neatherd, she who thinks herself above  
Rhea and Aphrodite and the Moon !

Cypris, thou too must never, late or soon,  
Thy leman kiss in town or on hill-side,  
But sleeping lone the live-long night abide !

## XXI

### THE FISHERMAN'S DREAM

WANT is the waker of the Arts, my friend,  
And Labour's teacher ; for the folk that toil  
Are e'en from slumber let by carking Cares ;  
Or should they close an eye by night, then, lo !  
These constant watchers startle Sleep away.

Two aged fishermen lay side by side  
Within their wattled hut, where they had strown  
Some withered wrack, and on this leafy couch  
Were flung. The tools of their hard handicraft  
Were lying near, the creels and rods and hooks,  
The bait of ocean-weed, the lines and weels,  
The bow-nets made of rush, the cords, the oars,  
And an old coble set on props. Beneath  
Their heads a scanty cloak ; for coverlet  
Their clothes. These were the fishers' only means,  
Their only wealth ; nor bolt, nor door, nor dog  
Had they, and all such things were deemed by them  
Superfluous ; for Want their watcher was.  
No neighbour dwelt anear them, but the sea  
Came rippling softly up a narrow creek  
Close to their cabin.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

And the car of the Moon  
Had not yet reached the middle of its course,  
When Toil's familiar call awaked the fishers.  
They from their eyelids chasing sleep away  
Bestirred their drowsy minds to utterance.

### FIRST FISHERMAN

Liars are they, mate, whosoever said  
That nights grow short o' summer, when Zeus  
brings  
Long days ; for countless visions have I seen,  
Yet morning is not. Am I at fault, mate, or  
Doth something ail the nights, so long they're  
grown ?

### SECOND FISHERMAN

Dost blame the lovely summer ? Nay, the seasons  
Have not forsook their wonted course ; but Care  
Troubling thy slumber makes the night seem long.

### FIRST FISHERMAN

Hast ever learned to interpret dreams ? I saw  
The fairest things. I would not have thee lack  
Thy portion in my vision. Share my dream  
E'en as thou shar'st the catch. Thou'lt rede it  
right,  
For thou hast sense.—That dream-interpreter  
Is best who hearkens to the voice of Sense.  
Time and to spare is ours. What can we do  
Awake on leafy couch beside the sea,  
Like ' the ass in the prickly bushes,' or ' the lamp  
In the Prytaneum ' ? As the proverbs say,  
' These ' never sleep.'



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Would I set foot again, but on the shore  
Would bide thenceforward and enjoy my wealth.  
And that awakened me. Now, mate, do thou  
Give me thy counsel, for I fear the oath  
Which then I sware.

### SECOND FISHERMAN

Nay, fear thee not at all.  
Thou art not sworn, for thou hast not found real  
The golden fish thou sawest, and the vision  
Was but a lie. But if unslumbering  
Thou search those waters, then perchance thy  
sleep  
Held luck for thee. Go seek the fish of flesh,  
Lest thou of hunger die and golden dreams!

## XXII

### THE PRAISES OF CASTOR AND POLYDEUCES

SING we the sons of Leda and Zeus who is lord  
of the ægis,  
Castor, and him that with thongs of leather bound  
on his knuckles  
Wieldeth terrible fists, Polydeuces! Ay, let us  
hymn you  
Twice and again, ye strong, brave sons of the  
daughter of Thestius,  
Spartan brethren, the aids of men when peril is  
utmost,  
Rescuing steeds run mad in the clash of the blood-  
red battle,  
Rescuing ships that brave all stars whether rising  
or setting,  
Yea, and encounter the breath of grievous gales  
that upraising  
Billows mighty a-stem or a-stern, or as each wind  
listeth,  
Dash these into the hold, and rive both sides of  
the vessel—  
Sail and mast and gear hang tangled and rent ; in  
a deluge



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Rain swoops down, night cometh apace, and the  
    sea roars loudly  
Smitten of blasts and of hail like iron. Natheless,  
    ye rescue  
E'en from the nether abyss both craft and crew  
    despairing.—  
Quickly the storm-winds cease, and a smiling calm  
    on the ocean  
Spreads, and the clouds flee apart, and the ' Bears '   
    shine forth, and the ' Manger '   
Mistily gleaming the ' Asses ' atween is a token of  
    all things  
Fair for voyaging—O ye friends and helpers of  
    mortals,  
Horsemen, and players both on the harp, ye  
    fighters and singers,  
Which of you first shall I hymn in my song,  
    Polydeuces or Castor ?  
Lo, I will hymn you both, but first will I sing  
    Polydeuces.

Scatheless had Argo 'scaped from the rock-isles  
    hurtling together—  
Terrible gateway these of the snow-swept Sea—  
    and had wafted  
Safe to Bebrycian land her freight of sons of  
    Immortals.  
Down by the ladder set each side of the vessel  
    of Jason  
Swarming they clomb, and alit on a beach deep-  
    sanded and sheltered.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

There they strewed their beds, and deftly the  
fire-sticks handled.

Then Polydeuces swart, and Castor, lord of the  
coursers,

Wandered away from their mates, they twain, and  
beheld with amazement

Every kind of tree on the hill, and under a rock-  
face

Came on a flowing spring that was ever full of the  
clearest

Water ; the pebbles gleamed from the depths like  
silver or crystal.

Pine-trees, aspens, planes and towering cypresses  
nigh it

Flourished, sweet blossoms too by the toilsome,  
wild, furry bees loved,

Blooms that are alway rife on the meads in the  
wane of the spring-time,

There sat a man in the sun, gigantic and awful  
to look on.

Torn were his ears by the blows of the boxer, and  
orbed were his monstrous

Bosom and back with flesh as of iron ; like an  
enormous

Wrought-metal statue he showed. On his arms,  
close up to the shoulder,

Firm stood his muscles and hard, like stones that a  
mountain-torrent

Rolls when the rains are here and rounds in the  
might of the eddies.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Over his neck and back was dangling the fell of a  
lion,  
Tied by the paws. Him accosts Polydeuces,  
winner of contests.

POLYDEUCES

Hail, friend unknown ! What folk, what land is  
this ?

AMYCUS

Why hailest me ? No stranger's face love I.

POLYDEUCES

Courage ! Nor knaves nor sons of knaves thou  
see'st.

AMYCUS

' Courage,' forsooth ! Thy schooling is unmeet.

POLYDEUCES

Art thou a surly savage, or a coxcomb ?

AMYCUS

E'en as thou see'st. On thy land tread I not.

POLYDEUCES

Come, and with hospitable gifts depart.

AMYCUS

Gift me no gifts, for I have none to give.

POLYDEUCES

Good Sir, would'st grudge a little of this water ?

AMYCUS

That shalt thou learn, if that thy lips be parched.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

POLYDEUCES

With silver or what guerdon can we move thee ?

AMYCUS

Only by putting hands up, man to man.

POLYDEUCES

Fists only, or with feet, and face to face ?

AMYCUS

Strive with thy fists, and spare thy skill no whit.

POLYDEUCES

With whom, then, shall I clash my thong-bound  
hands ?

AMYCUS

With me. No man shall call ' the boxer ' girl.

POLYDEUCES

Is there a prize for which we twain shall fight ?

AMYCUS

The vanquished shall be called the victor's thrall.

POLYDEUCES

On this wise are the frays of red-combed cocks.

AMYCUS

Lions or cocks, for this alone we'll fight.

So spake Amycus. He then a hollow conch  
uplifting

Trumpeted. Under the shade of the plane-trees  
hastily gathered

Long-haired men of Bebrycia aroused by the blast  
of the sea-shell.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Likewise Castor, the lord of battle, departed and  
summoned  
All that muster of chiefs from the fair Magnessian  
vessel.

So, when their fists were wrapped in weight-giving  
coils of leather,  
Winding the laces around each arm, they met in  
the ring's midst,  
Breathing slaughter against each other, and  
fiercely they struggled  
Which were to face from the sun. By skill did'st  
thou, Polydeuces,  
This from the giant win, and his eyne were smitten  
with sun-rays.  
Sore was his wrath, and on he came with blows at  
his rival.  
Him Tyndarides hit on the chin as he charged, and  
his anger  
Thereby fiercer was roused, and volleying random  
buffets  
Forward he plunged, head down. The Bebry-  
cians uttered a clamour ;  
Yea, and the heroes all in reply cheered on  
Polydeuces,  
Fearing lest in so narrow a place that Tityan giant  
Bore him down with his weight. But shifting hither  
and thither,  
Yet close ever, the son of the Highest bruised him  
with both fists,  
Thwarting the onset wild of the monstrous child  
of Poseidon.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Dizzy with blows stood he spitting crimson blood,  
and the heroes  
All roared loudly for joy when they saw weals  
grievous arising  
Over his mouth and jowl. Half-closed were the  
eyes on the swollen  
Visage. Now with feints all round him he baffled  
and vexed him ;  
Then, when he marked him a-weary and mazed,  
with a clenched fist hit him  
Just where brow meets nose, and cut him right to  
the skull-bone.  
Backward down fell he full length in the midst of  
the herbage.  
Grimly the fight was renewed when he rose ;  
each battered his rival,  
Smiting with stubborn thongs. The Bebrycian  
leader assaulted  
Breast and thigh and neck. Polydeuces, peerless  
in combat,  
Mauled his foeman's face all over with horrible  
buffets.  
Quickly the giant waned, his flesh quite shrunken  
with sweating,  
Larger his rival's limbs ever waxed as he held to  
his labour,  
Haler his hue.

Oh, tell to me now, thou daughter of Heaven,  
How Zeus' valiant son o'ercame that gluttonous  
monster.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Thou goddess, yea, thou alone dost know; what  
am I but a mouthpiece,  
Willing to speak what matter soe'er, and howe'er,  
thou desirest ?

Amycus, wishing to work some wondrous deed,  
from position  
Swerving aside, gripped fast Polydeuces' left with  
his own left ;  
Then lunged forward sweeping his arm from his  
right thigh upward.  
Had he but reached, he had maimed his foeman,  
the King of Amyclæ ;  
But with a jerk of his neck he avoids this blow,  
with his right hand  
Smiting the giant's head on the side with a drive  
from the shoulder.  
Swiftly the life-blood gushed from a gaping wound  
on the temple.  
Smiting his mouth with his left, he rattled his  
ranges of tushes,  
Bruising his rival's face with strokes ever swifter,  
and pounded  
Both his cheeks, till a-swoon fell he at last on the  
meadow  
All his length, and with hands held forth begged  
off from the battle,  
Nigh unto death being then. Yet so, no ven-  
geance upon him  
Did'st thou conquering wreak, Polydeuces, peer-  
less of boxers ;

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Natheless he solemnly sware by Poseidon, his  
ocean-father,  
Never, never again to be churlish unto a stranger.

Now have I thy praise hymned, O King; and  
next will I thee sing,  
Castor, lord of the steeds, thou bronze-mailed  
Tyndarid lanceman.

Those twin children of Zeus had stol'n Leucippus's  
maiden

Daughters twain, and a pair of brothers after them  
hasted,

Aphareus' lads, of bridal bereft, brave Idas and  
Lynceus.

These having won to the tomb of their father,  
forth from their chariots

Leaping, clashed with the foe in a mellay of lances  
and bucklers.

Lynceus then through his helm cries out and  
accosts them in this wise:—

'Sirs, why seek ye to fight, and why for the wives  
of your fellows

Rage ye, and hold bare knives in your hands?  
Unto us did aforetime

Old Leucippus his maids assign with an oath in  
betrothal;

But ye wrongfully sought with guerdon of mules  
and of oxen,

Ay, and with gold, the betrothed of your neigh-  
bours, and won to your wishes



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

(Stealing a wedlock with gifts) their sire. Unto  
both of you often,  
Yea, to your face have I said, though quite  
unskilful in converse :  
“ Friends, it is all unmeet great heroes woo upon  
this wise  
Maids already betrothed ; lo, wide are Sparta  
and Elis—  
Elis famed for the horse—Arcadian pastures,  
Achaia’s  
Towns and Messene and Argos and all the Cor-  
inthian foreland.  
Many the maidens there that are reared by father  
and mother,  
Lacking for nought in shape or in mind ; and of  
those ye may lightly  
Choose you a bride to your will, for many would  
offer their daughters  
Unto so regal youths as are ye in the kinship of  
heroes,  
Ye and your sires and all their race from their  
fathers aforetime.  
Come, friends, suffer us now this wedlock of ours  
to accomplish,  
Yea, and let all seek out and for you twain find  
other bridals.”  
Oftwhiles these were my words, but a blast of wind  
to the ocean  
Bare them away ; no favour they found, for  
stubborn and haughty

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Ever are ye ; but yield e'en now, for ye both are  
our cousins,—  
Kin on the father's side ; or, an if your hearts  
are for fighting,  
Yea, and we must dip spears in the blood of an  
equal combat,  
Brave Polydeuces here and Idas shall from the  
conflict  
Hold them and stay their hands, while Castor and  
I do battle,  
We who are younger born, that so we may leave  
to our parents  
No excess of sorrow—from one house one life  
taken.  
Then shall the winners feast, being brought from  
death unto wedlock,  
All their companions, ay, and shall take those  
maidens in marriage.  
So were a great dispute well ended, and little to  
weep for.'

These were his words, and the God was minded  
then to fulfil them.

Quickly the elders doffed their gear from their  
shoulders and laid it  
Down on the ground. Then forth stepped  
Lynceus shaking his war-spear  
Under the buckler's rim, and in likewise Castor  
brandished

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

His keen lance ; tall plumes waved over the helmet  
of either.

First with their spears they toiled, each aiming a  
blow at his rival

Wheresoever he spied any part of the foeman  
unguarded ;

Natheless, ere either was hurt their spear-heads  
snapped in the bucklers.

Then from the sheath they drew their swords,  
with a murderous onslaught

Dashing together again ; no surcease was there of  
combat.

Many were Castor's blows that fell on the shield  
of the other,

Fell on his horsehair crest, and often the keen-  
eyed Lynceus

Smote his foeman's targe, just touching the tuft  
on his helmet.

Castor then slipping back his left foot severed his  
rival's

Fingers, as *he* lashed out at his leg on the left with  
his weapon.

Lynceus dropped his sword, then swift to the tomb  
of the father—

There where Idas brave was leaning and watching  
the kinsmen

Battling together—fled, and the son of Tyndareus  
after

Bounded and slashed his brand right through from  
the flank to the navel,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Spilling the entrails. Down fell Lynceus prone on  
his mouth there,  
Whilst on his eyelids rushed that sleep which  
knows not of waking.

Nay, nor that other indeed of her sons did  
Laocoösa  
See by the hearth in his home with bridal duly  
accomplished.

Hastily wrenching the tall straight slab from the  
tomb of their father,  
Idas was ready to slay his brother's slayer, and  
*had* slain,  
But to his aid came Zeus, and dashed from the  
hands of the thrower  
That wrought stone, consuming the man with a  
bolt of his lightning.  
'Tis not a light emprise to do battle with Tyn-  
dareus' offspring;  
Mighty are they themselves, and mighty the Sire  
who begat them.

---

Farewell, sons of Leda, and aye grant fame to my  
verses!  
Friends are the children of song to the sons of  
Tyndareus ever,  
Yea, and to Helen, and heroes all that with king  
Menelaus  
Brought upon Troy destruction. For you that  
minstrel of Chios  
Glory devised, ye Kings, by singing the city of  
Priam,

## *GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY*

Greek ships, Ilion's wars and Achilles, bulwark of  
battle.

I, too, bring you the charm of the clear-voiced  
Maidens of Heaven,

Theirs, yea and mine, for songs are the fairest  
meed for Immortals.

## XXIII

### THE VENGEANCE OF LOVE

A PASSIONATE man pined for a haughty youth  
Of lovely form but of unlovely soul,  
And harsh to his adorer. Nothing kind  
Was his ; nor knew he what a god is Love,  
How strong the bow he wields, with what keen  
arrows

He woundeth hearts ; but ever cold was he  
To speech and greeting. No assuagement was  
Of passion, not a quiver of lip, no soft  
Glance from the eye, no blush, no word, no kiss,  
That lightens love ; but as a woodland beast  
Casteth a wild shy look upon the hunter,  
E'en so did he unto the man ; and fierce  
His lips were set against him, and his eyes  
Gleamed with the stern and dreadful glance of  
Fate.

His cheek would blanch with anger, and the flush  
Which lay like raiment on his lovely limbs  
Would flee away ; yet was he fair e'en thus,  
His very wrath charming his lovers more.  
At length that one no longer could endure  
Such fire of passionate love, and sought the house  
Of his hard-hearted darling, and there he wept,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

And kissed the door-post, lifting up his voice :—  
' Cruel and hateful boy, stone-hearted, a lioness  
Suckled thee, boy unworthy of love. I come to  
thee  
With a final gift, this noose for my neck, thy  
wrathfulness  
Never to rouse any more, for I go where thou  
doomest me,  
To the place where men say lovers shall find a  
remede for woe,  
And the stream of Forgetfulness is. But e'en did  
I drink it dry,  
Putting my lips thereto, I could never quench the  
glow  
Of my passionate desire ; but now I will say  
good-bye  
Unto thy gates. Right well do I know what  
thing will be.  
Fair is the rose, but Time doth make it to wither  
away,  
And soon the violet fades that in spring is fair  
to see,  
The white lily fades and falls, and the white snow  
will not stay ;  
And fair is the beauty of boys, yet it lives but a  
little space ;  
And lo, that morrow will dawn when thee shall  
desire drive mad,  
And thy heart shall be burning within thee, and  
bitter tears on thy face.  
But do to me now this last dear favour, I pray thee,  
lad.—

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Whenas at thy coming forth thou shalt see me  
    hanging here  
At thy gateway, pass not coldly by me, for pity's  
    sake,  
But stand and sorrow a while ; then, letting fall a  
    tear,  
Loose me from off the rope ; from thy limbs a  
    mantle take,  
And fold it about me, and hide me, and give me a  
    last loving kiss,  
Gracing the dead with thy lips, and have no fear  
    of me ;  
I cannot kiss thee back—'Twill be full atonement  
    this—  
Then pile me a barrow wherein my love-woe  
    hidden shall be,  
And cry thrice over me, " Rest in peace," ere  
    thou onward speed.—  
Yea, cry this too, an thou wilt, " I have lost my  
    comrade true."  
And write (on the wall I'll grave it), " Traveller,  
    stand and read ;  
Here lieth a man whom love for a cruel comrade  
    slew." "

He spake, and took a stone, and leaning it  
Against the wall to half the doorpost's height,  
A dreadful stone, he fastened from the lintel  
The slender rope, and cast about his neck  
The noose, and kicked the prop away, and so  
Was hanged to death.



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

And that one oped his door,  
And saw the corse from his own court-wall hanging,  
Nor yet was wrung in soul, nor wept the strange  
Sad end, nor soiled with death his boy's fair weeds ;  
But hied him to the wrestling-ground, and there,  
Bethought him of the baths, and left his friends,  
And came unto the very Deity  
He'd slighted. From the marble pedestal  
He dived into the waters ; and lo ! the statue  
Fell on that youth and slew him ; and the wave  
Was crimsoned with his life-blood, and upbore  
The floating corse of the belovèd lad.

Lovers, rejoice ; the cruel boy was slain.  
Belov'd ones, love ; the god can 'venge amain.

## XXIV

### THE CHILD HERACLES AND THE SNAKES

WHEN Heracles was waxen ten moons old,  
Alcmena took both him and his brother twin,  
Iphicles (one night younger, it is told),  
And bathed and suckled them, then safe within  
The hollow shield Amphitryon once did win  
From Pterclaus, a graven shield and fair,  
She laid them down, and stroked her babies' hair,  
Saying : ' Sleep, babes, a sweet and healthful sleep,  
Oh sleep, my darlings, safely through the night ;  
In joy, dear baby brethren, slumber deep,  
In joy behold the morrow's dawning light.'  
So they were rocked asleep. But when the  
    bright  
' Orion's ' shoulder glimmered, and the ' Bear '  
Was sloping downward to his midnight lair,  
Unto the threshold wide of that demesne,  
Where stood the hollow pillars and the gate,  
Two monster snakes bristling in azure sheen  
Did guileful Hera send in bitter hate,  
On Heracles their maw to satiate ;  
And so, uncoiling, those soft-gliding two  
Along the ground their ravening bellies drew.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

And from their eyne leapt forth an evil flame,  
And from their mouths envenomed ooze did fall,  
As ever nearer to the babes they came  
With flickering tongues. But Zeus, who knoweth  
all,

Wakened the boys ; his glory lit the wall,  
And loud screams Iphicles when he espies  
Those monsters' teeth above the buckler rise ;

And with his feet he spurned the coverlet,  
Striving to flee, but out flung Heracles  
Both hands, which round the lithe necks tightly  
met,

(For there the poisons lie, which no man sees,  
Of a deadly snake—shunned e'en by gods are these)  
And round the suckling babe the coils werespread—  
The nursling that a tear had never shed.

Quickly they loosed their aching spines again,  
Striving from out their durance to be free.  
Alcmena heard the cry and wakened then.—  
'Amphitryon, rise ; for fear hath hold of me.  
Arise, and put not sandals on ; for see  
At dead of night the walls are glimmering  
As with the dawn. Surely a dreadful thing

Hath happed within the house. Did'st thou not  
hear

How loud a cry our younger baby gave ?'  
She spake. He to his wife lent ready ear,  
And leaped from bed to seize his falchion brave  
Slung nigh his cedarn couch, a grave glay.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

One hand reached for the woven baldrick good,  
The other raised the sheath of lotus-wood.

Darkness again filled all that chamber fair.  
Then called he to the drowsy-breathing thralls :  
' Lights from the hearth, ho ! Back with the door-  
bolts, there ! '

And then a slave-girl, ta'en from Tyrian halls,  
Cried : ' Bondsmen, rise ; it is the master calls '—  
Her couch was by the mill-stones at the porch—  
And forth they came with many a blazing torch.

All hastened, and the house was filled with din.  
And when they saw the baby Heracles  
With two dead snakes his tender fists within,  
Astonied all cried out ; but holding these,  
He leaped for gladness, and, his sire to please,  
Bade him behold the snakes with death fordone,  
And laughing laid them nigh Amphitryon.

Alcmena to her bosom pressed his brother,  
Iphicles, withered up and blanched with dread ;  
Amphitryon 'neath a lamb's fleece laid that other,  
And then betook himself to rest and bed.

When thrice the cocks had sung dawn's early  
red,

Alcmena bade Tiresias to her view,  
The truthful seer, and told the wonder new,

And urged him to unfold what thing should be.

' Nor, an the gods,' she said, ' devise me woes,  
Hide it for pity. No need to tell *thee*

That what from off the fateful spindle flows

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Man must abide.' His voice in answer rose :  
' Mother of noble children, have good cheer ;  
Daughter of Perseus, cease from boding fear.

For, by the sweet light vanished from my eyne,  
Henceforth at eve Achæan women oft  
Shall sing the glory of that name of thine,  
As on their lap they tease the sheep's wool soft,  
So great is he, thy son, who high aloft  
To starry heaven shall go, so broad of breast.—  
Yea, man and beast to him shall bow their crest.

His shall it be twelve labours to fulfil,  
And then in Zeus' halls to dwell for aye.  
A Trachis funeral-pyre shall work its will  
On all that served him for his mortal day ;  
And from the gods his bride shall be,—'twas they  
Roused from their lair these snakes to kill the  
child—

Then fawns shall couch with wolves, and wolves  
be mild.<sup>1</sup>—

But, lady, 'neath the ashes nurse the fire,  
And gather fuel of gorse, or wilding pear  
Dried by the tempest's whirl, or thorn, or briar,  
And burn on those rough brands the two snakes  
there

At the midnight hour (when they did hither fare  
To kill thy child), and let a serving-may  
Gather the dust and bear it far away

<sup>1</sup> It is thought by some that Theocritus had read the *Septuagint*, but this line may be an interpolation.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

At dawn, and from the rugged cliffs which rise  
Above the stream forth let her fling it all,  
And hie her back with unreverted eyes.  
Then first with burning sulphur cleanse the hall,  
Next salted water of the ritual  
Sprinkle from wreathèd bough, and slay a boar  
To Zeus above—so shall your foes give o'er.'

He spake, pushed back the chair of ivory,  
And went his way though laden sore with years.  
And Heracles beneath his mother's eye  
Waxed like a sapling that some vineyard rears,  
And hight Amphitryon's son in all men's ears.  
Old Linus learned the lad in character,  
A hero and a watchful teacher he.

Eurytus, wealthy in ancestral lands,  
Taught him to draw the bow and aim aright ;  
Eumolpus learned him song, and trained his hands  
To play the boxwood lyre ; and every sleight  
That men of Argos in the wrestling-fight  
Against each other use, the artful guile  
Of thong-armed boxers, each pancration wile,—

All these and more he learnt from Hermes' son,  
Harpalycus of Phocis, whom descried  
E'en from afar off fiercely wrestling, none,  
For dread of his grim face, could well abide.  
Amphitryon gladly taught the boy to ride  
Upon the chariot, and to drive his yoke  
Safe round the goal and keep his nave unbroke.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

(For oft in Argos, pasture-land of steeds,  
Full many a treasure unto his abode  
Had he as guerdon ta'en for mighty deeds.  
Unscathed were aye the chariots he bestrode ;  
Time only did their leathern thongs corrode.)  
And Castor taught him how with poisèd lance,  
And shield at side, to stay a foe's advance,

To bide the biting of a foeman's blade,  
To range the phalanx and command the horse,  
To gauge the numbers of an ambushade  
Ere swooping down on it in headlong course ;  
For Castor, prince of horsemanship, perforce  
Had come from Argos, when that vineyard land  
Was held by Tydeus at Adrastus' hand.

No warrior yet was ever Castor's peer  
Among the demi-gods ere age did quell  
His youthful strength. Thus did his mother rear  
Her son. He slept upon a lion's fell  
Anigh his father's couch, and liked it well.  
He dined on roasted flesh and Dorian bread  
Piled in a crate in plenty to have fed

A garden thrall ; on meagre, uncooked fare  
He supped : a plain weed let his knees be bare.

## XXV

### THE SLAYING OF THE NEMEAN LION BY HERACLES

HIM then the time-worn swain and faithful guard  
of the harvest,  
Ceasing the work of his hands, thus addressed :  
‘ Right willingly, stranger,  
Thee will I answer in full, for I honour the  
High-way Hermes ;  
Ay, for they say that most among all the Immortals  
is *his* wrath,  
If that a man should refuse to be guide unto  
one that entreats him.  
Not one pasture alone do the flocks of the prince  
Augeas  
Roam for their food ; some browse by the banks  
of the river Elisius,  
Some by the sacred stream of Alpheus, or near the  
Buprasian  
Vineyard, in this meadow some, and scattered  
apart are the sheep-folds.  
Here ever fresh are the meads for the cattle, how  
many soever  
Nigh unto Menius’ wide-spread pool, for the leas  
and the lowland



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Dewy are rich in sweet lush grass giving strength  
to the oxen.

Lo ! to the right of thee shows their byre seen  
clearly by all men,

There on the farther side of the stream where  
the ranges of plane-trees

Mingled with olives make that grove of the  
Shepherd-Apollo,

God of pastures,—a god most sure in fulfilment,  
stranger.

Nigh it are builded fair large bields for the herds-  
men and ploughmen,

Us who are careful guards of the king's untellable  
riches,

Sowers of seed in the thrice and the four-times  
laboured furrow.

Only the delving, hard-wrought thralls that flock  
to the wine-vats,

Then when the summer is ripe to the full, know  
where are his marches.

Yea, for the meads and the tilth and the vineyards  
green are the monarch's

Up to the farthest ridge of the fountained-hills ;  
and the day long

These we tend, as hinds are wont that live in  
the open.

Come now and tell to me thou (for, stranger, so  
it were better)

Why thou art here. Dost seek Augeas, or one of  
his house-thralls ?

Gladly to thee will I speak and with knowledge.  
Surely of noble

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Race art thou ; nor art mean thyself ; thy bearing  
is mighty.

Yea, upon this wise tarry the sons of the gods  
among mortals.'

Him then in answer addressed that valiant child  
of the Highest :

'Yea, old sir, I desire to behold Augeas, your  
ruler ;

Him himself to behold am I come ; but an if  
with the council

Now in the township he bides, and taking heed  
for the people

Sets right judgments forth, then go with me unto  
a steward,

One placed over the hinds, and to him will I  
make my petition ;

Yea, and from him shall learn what I would, for  
the will of the gods is

Each man here among men should have alway need  
of another.'

Him then again that swain so goodly and ancient  
answered :

'Friend, 'twas surely the word of a god was a  
guide to thee hither,

All thy wish being straight fulfilled ; for the child  
of the sun-god,

King Augeas, is here with his lordly and strong  
son Phyleus.

Hither he came yestreen at last from the city, his  
myriad

Flocks and herds to review in the fields,—e'en  
kings ever deem it

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Safer to heed their house themselves. But go we  
towards him ;  
I will be thy guide to the fold where haply we'll  
find him.'  
So he spake ; then led on the way and greatly  
he wondered,  
Seeing the wild beast's fell and the club in his  
right hand holden,  
Whence were the stranger come, and was eager to  
question him ; nathless  
Fear bade him check that speech on his lips, lest  
haply he uttered  
Words in a hastener's ear ill-timed ; for 'tis not a  
light thing  
Thoroughly to know what a man may think. And  
sudden the watch-dogs  
Felt their approach from afar by their scent and  
the sound of their footsteps.  
Barking loudly they dashed at Amphitryon's  
offspring from all sides,  
Noisily too they fawned on the aged man. From  
the roadway  
Lifting a stone (no more) he scared them, and  
menacing each one  
Roughly and loud he stayed their barking, inly  
rejoicing  
These, whilst he was away, had warders been of  
the farm-yard.  
Then spake thus : ' Now, alack, what a beast  
the immortal Rulers  
Here have giv'n to abide with man, how wanting  
in foresight !

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

If but his mind had a tittle of sense, and he wist of  
the seasons  
When to be angry, and friend from foe he knew,  
not another  
Creature had earned such praise, but now too  
wrathful and fiery  
Ever is he.' So spake he, and swiftly they came  
to the steading.

Lo, and already the steeds of the Sun were sloping  
to westward,  
Bringing the eventide, and the flocks came up  
from the pasture  
Seeking the steading-folds ; then cattle in count-  
less thousands  
Showed on their forward march like storm-clouds,  
such as are driven  
Up by the wind of the South or the might of the  
Thracian north-wind—  
Numberless onward in air they move, for the  
might of the tempest  
Rolls on many ahead, and many another behind  
them  
Rears its crest. E'en so comes herd upon herd  
ever forward.  
Thronged are the pastures all, and on all ways  
hasten the lowing  
Cattle along, and the byres are speedily filled with  
the oxen  
Shambling of gait, and the penned-up flocks lie  
down in the sheep-folds.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Then not a man of the many who stood by the  
kine was an idler  
Lacking a task, but this one bound smooth thongs  
as a halter  
Over their feet, and stood close by them to milk,  
and that one  
Under the mothers set all youngling calves that  
were thirsting  
Sore for the sweet rich milk, and another the  
pitcher handled.  
One of them curdled cream into cheese, and the  
bulls with another  
Went to a steading apart from the kine, and the  
chieftain noted,  
Going to every byre, how his wealth was watched  
by his herdsmen.  
There with him went his son; and Heracles  
mighty in counsel  
Followed along with the king as he moved in the  
midst of his riches.  
Then Amphitryon's heir, albeit a soul in his  
inward  
Bosom he bore unbroke and for ever not to be  
shaken,  
Greatly was moved to behold so countless a guer-  
don of Heaven.  
Ne'er would have one man in sooth been deemed  
to possess that abundant  
Wealth of neat, nay, not ten kings most wealthy  
of monarchs.  
This most bounteous gift was made by the Sun to  
his offspring,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

So that of all men he should rich be in sheep and  
in cattle ;  
Yea, and he gave to the herds large increase ever ;  
a murrain  
Never on those beasts came, that curse of the  
herdsman's labour.  
Ever the hornèd kine more numerous waxed, ever  
sleeker  
Year by year, and they all bare live young, all bare  
heifers.  
Bulls three hundred along with them went, swart-  
hided and white-legg'd,  
Ten score others were red and all of them sires.  
Now among these  
Twelve there were, white as swans, the peculiar  
care of the sun-god ;  
Easily *they* stood out from the rest of the shamb-  
ling oxen ;  
Far from the herd they browsed on the rife rich  
grass of their pastures,  
Such their wanton pride ; and whene'er from the  
tangled thicket  
Down on the meadow the fleet-footed wild-beasts  
leaped for the cattle,  
These dashed first to the fight, from afar off  
sniffing the odour.  
Dread their bellowing then, and their eyes held  
death in their glances.  
Chief of them all in strength and might and glory  
of valour  
Went great Phaëthon ; him to a star all neatherds  
likened,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

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kine was an idler  
Lacking a task, but this one bound smooth thongs  
as a hopple  
Over their feet, and stood close by them to milk,  
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Ever the hornèd kine more numerous waxed, ever  
sleeker  
Year by year, and they all bare live young, all bare  
heifers.  
Bulls three hundred along with them went, swart-  
hided and white-legg'd,  
Ten score others were red and all of them sires.  
Now among these  
Twelve there were, white as swans, the peculiar  
care of the sun-god ;  
Easily *they* stood out from the rest of the shamb-  
ling oxen ;  
Far from the herd they browsed on the rife rich  
grass of their pastures,  
Such their wanton pride ; and whene'er from the  
tangled thicket  
Down on the meadow the fleet-footed wild-beasts  
leaped for the cattle,  
These dashed first to the fight, from afar off  
sniffing the odour.  
Dread their bellowing then, and their eyes held  
death in their glances.  
Chief of them all in strength and might and glory  
of valour  
Went great Phaëthon ; him to a star all neatherds  
likened,



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Seeing him shine as he moved far-seen in the  
throng of the oxen.  
He then spying the rough and parchèd fell of the  
lion,  
Wildly on Heracles rushed, with his hornèd and  
stubborn forehead  
Him on the thigh to assail ; but swiftly the keen-  
eyed hero  
Seized on the leftmost horn as he charged, and  
bended his heavy  
Neck to the ground, and forced him back with a  
thrust of the shoulder.  
Swoln on his huge upper arm his muscle stood out  
from the sinews.  
Him that chieftain admired, and the son of the  
chieftain, Phyleus,  
Yea, and the herdsmen, the guards of the kine,  
on beholding the wondrous  
Might of Amphitryon's heir.

Then straightway down to the city,  
Leaving the champaign rich, in company Phyleus  
and mighty  
Heracles wend their way ; and close by the edge  
of the high-road,—  
Swiftly the narrow path they had walked which  
stretched from the steading  
Down through the vines ('twas a path running  
green and dim in the vineyard)—  
Phyleus, son of the king, with head just turned  
to the shoulder,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Says to the son of Zeus Most High who followed  
    anear him :  
‘ Stranger, of thee I heard some story of old—and  
    it runneth  
Now in my mind as I speak—for of thee that tale  
    was surely.  
Wave-washed Helice once sent hither a son of  
    Achaia,  
Youthful and strong, who speaking amidst of many  
    Epeans  
Told how an Argive man (he present) slaughtered  
    a lion  
Fierce and dreadful, the bane of the field-folk,  
    having his hollow  
Lair by the Nemean grove of Zeus ; but rightly  
    I mind not  
Whether from Argos he said, or Tiryns or old  
    Mycenæ  
Came that man, and he called him (unless my  
    memory tricks me)  
Offspring of Perseus’ blood ; and methinks that  
    of all men of Argos  
Thou, friend, did’st that deed ; for the lion-skin  
    clearly betokens  
Some brave doing of thine,—that fell thy thighs  
    are enwrap in.  
Come, first tell to me now, that so I may know for  
    a surety,  
Hero, whether my thought be a true one or no,—  
    an that Argive  
Helice-born spake sooth, and my guess be aright  
    —unfolding

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

How thou alone did'st slay that baneful brute ;  
yea, and tell me  
How to the watered land of Nemea came he, for  
monsters  
Such on the Apian soil never breathe, nor could'st  
thou behold one  
E'en an thou would'st, but bears and boars and  
the wolf's fierce kindred.  
Wherefore on hearing the tale we wondered ; and  
some said a falsehood  
Spake that stranger, and lied with a lavish tongue  
to his hearers.'  
So said Phyleus, and moved from the mid-way,  
making sufficient  
Room for their walking abreast, thus better to  
hearken his answer.  
Heracles walking beside him addressed him and  
spake upon this wise :  
'Son of Augeas, well and aright, thine earlier question  
Thou thyself hast answered, and thee will I tell  
how the monster  
Met with his end, since learn thou would'st. But  
one thing I cannot  
Tell thee ; for whence he appeared I know not,  
and none of the Argives  
Clearly can say—this alone—we deem that a god  
in his anger,  
Rites being unfulfilled, sent down on the sons of  
Phoroneus  
That dire plague ; for he came on the lowlanders,  
like to a bursting  
Torrent, ravaging all, but mostly the Bembinæans.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

*Their* home nearest lay to the beast, and great  
were their sorrows.  
This as my first hard task Eurystheus laid on my  
shoulders,  
Bidding me slay that monster of dread. So,  
taking my lissom  
Bow and my quiver of shafts in the one hand,  
forth I sallied,  
Holding a cudgel, a tough, rugged olive-trunk, in  
the other,—  
One which erst I found 'neath Helicon holy and  
tore it  
Root and all from the ground—And whenas to  
the haunt of the lion  
Now was I come, I seized on my bow, and over the  
bow-tip  
Slipping the twisted cord, I speedily fastened a  
stinging  
Arrow thereon, and cast keen eyes all round for  
the monster,  
Hoping to spy him first ere he were aware of my  
coming.  
Lo ! it was now full noon, and as yet no trace of  
him found I,  
Nought could I see, no roar could I hear, no wight  
by his oxen,  
None by the furrowed corn-field stood whom a  
man could inquire of ;  
Fear held all of them fast in the steadings. Over  
the woody  
Mountain I ranged with a foot untired, till at  
last I beheld him,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Then made trial at once of my prowess. He to  
his antre  
Slowly was moving ere night came down, having  
gorged on a bloody  
Carcass; dust-clotted mane and chest and  
furiously-glancing  
Visage dabbled with gore, red tongue on the chin  
out-lolling.  
Swiftly I crouched in the shade of the scrub on a  
wood-covered hillock,  
Watching whence he should leap, and shot at his  
heart as he neared me—  
Vainly I hit him; the shaft pierced not through  
the flesh of the creature.  
Back on the grass it fell; and swiftly he raised his  
tawny  
Head from the ground in amaze, and cast keen  
glances about him,  
Showing the lustful teeth in his open jaws, and  
against him  
Launching a second shaft from the string, in wrath  
that yon other  
Sped from my hand in vain, right there in the  
cleft of the breast-bone,  
Over the lungs I hit him. The dolorous arrow  
rebounded  
Void of effect from his hide, and dropped by the  
feet of the monster.  
Grievously wroth in soul, I was once more stretch-  
ing my bow-string,  
But that ravening beast with wild eyes glancing  
about him

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Spied me, and round his flanks his tail lashed.  
Fury was on him.  
Swoln was his neck with wrath, and his mane all  
bristling with anger,  
Curved his back as a bow strung tight, and the  
mass of him huddled  
Under his haunches and loins. And then, as,  
when masterful wainwrights  
Bend soft fig-boughs warmed in the fire as wheels  
for a chariot,  
Forth of their handling the thin bent wood springs  
far in a moment,  
Even so that lion of dread from a distance upon  
me  
Bounded, lusting my flesh to devour ; but swift  
with my left hand  
Holding the arrows forth and the double cloak  
from my shoulder,  
Whilst with the other I lifted my rugged mace to  
my temple,  
Him I smote on the pate, and shattered my  
bludgeon of olive  
Over the crown of the great grim brute, and ere  
that he reached me,  
Down to the earth he fell, and stood on his  
wavering feet there  
Swaying his head ; night rushed on his eyne ; for  
the brain was reeling  
Under the smitten skull ; and seeing him dazed  
with the anguish,  
Ere he again could breathe, I struck his neck on  
the sudden

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Full on the nape with my fist, having flung both  
bow and quiver  
Down on the ground, and then with stout hands  
pressing together  
Throttled him hard from behind for fear his claws  
should assail me,  
Crushing his hind-feet down with my heels, right  
firmly upon them  
Standing, and gripping tight his ribs with my  
thighs, till I held him  
Straight up, stretched full length, by the paws, all  
breath from the body  
Gone, and the gulf of Hell had gotten the soul  
of him. Doubt then  
Seized on my mind how to tear that rough-maned  
hide from the carcass.  
Aught but a light task that ; no iron or flint would  
rive it,  
No, nor what else I essayed. Some god then,  
ware of my trouble,  
Counselled me inly to flay with the claws that lion,  
and swiftly  
So I did, and about my limbs his fell for a mantle  
Flung as a guard 'gainst havoc of war. Thus,  
friend, was an ending  
'Made of the Nemean beast once deadly to men  
and to cattle.'

## XXVI

## PENTHEUS AND THE MÆNADS

THREE mænads, Ino and Autonoe  
 And apple-checked Agave led to the hill  
 Three bands of bassarids, and stripping off  
 All the wild leafage of a shaggy oak,  
 And plucking ivy lush and asphodel  
 Of upper earth, they built them altars twelve  
 There in an open mead, to Semele three,  
 To Dionysus nine ; and from the coffer  
 Taking the secret cakes they silently  
 Laid them upon the altars of fresh leaves ;  
 For so the god himself had taught, and so  
 Would have it. Pentheus from a lofty rock,  
 Where 'mid the ancient lentisks of Cithæron  
 He lay, saw everything. Autonoe first  
 Spied him and shrieked ; then, dashing forward,  
     marred

The rites of raving Bacchus with her feet—  
 Rites ever unbecom'g of men profane.  
 She maddened, and the others maddened too,  
 And Pentheus fled in fear, but they pursued  
 With raiment gathered up about the thigh.  
 Then Pentheus cried : ' Women, what would ye  
     do ? '

Answered Autonoe : ' Thou shalt quickly know—  
 Yea, ere thou hear.'



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

His mother seized the head  
Of her own child, and gave a long loud cry,  
As howls the lioness among her cubs.  
Then Ino, setting heel upon his belly,  
Tore the great shoulder and the shoulder-blade  
From off the man. Like was Autonoe's way.  
The others part the remnant of his flesh  
Among themselves, then unto Thebes all go,  
Dabbled with blood, and from the mountain  
bring  
Not Pentheus, but *the sorrow of his name*.<sup>1</sup>

But nought care I ; yea and let no man heed  
For any foe of Bacchus that should suffer  
The like or worse ; but let him be as a child  
Of nine or ten. May I be childlike too,  
And with the pure and holy favour find !  
From ægis-bearing Zeus this prophecy  
Hath praise : ' The children of the pious thrive,  
The children of the impious come to woe.'

Hail, Dionysus, thou whom Zeus Most High  
In snowy Dracanus hid safe, when he  
Had oped his mighty groin, and all hail, thou,  
Fair Semele, and sisterhood Cadmean  
Of hero's daughters, dear to many a one !  
At Dionysus' hest ye wrought this deed—  
A deed not to be blamed in any wise—  
Let no man blame the working of the gods !

<sup>1</sup> There is a pun here on the name Pentheus and the word *penthema* = 'woe.'

## XXVII

### THE LOVER AND HIS LASS

THE GIRL

. . . Ay, 'twas a neatherd ravished virtuous Helen.

DAPHNIS

Nay, nay, for she caught *him*, and with a kiss.

THE GIRL

Prate not, young satyr, for—' a kiss is nought.'

DAPHNIS

' E'en empty kisses have a sweet delight.'

THE GIRL

I rub my mouth and blow thy kiss away.

DAPHNIS

Dost rub thy lips ? Give them again to kiss !

THE GIRL

Heifers should'st *thou* kiss, not an unwed maid.

DAPHNIS

Prate not, for Youth drifts by thee like a dream—

THE GIRL

But raisins come from grapes, the dried rose  
lives—

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

DAPHNIS

I too am ageing—a sip of milk and honey !

THE GIRL

Hands off !—Would'st dare !—I'll scratch thy lips again !

DAPHNIS

Come 'neath yon olives and hearken to a tale.

THE GIRL

Nay, with a sweet tale thou did'st fool me once.

DAPHNIS

Come 'neath yon elms, and listen to my pipe !

THE GIRL

Pleasure thyself. No silly song love I.

DAPHNIS

Ah, maiden, maiden, dread the Paphian's wrath !

THE GIRL

Good-bye to her, if Artemis be kind !

DAPHNIS

Hush, lest she fling thee in her scapeless toils !

THE GIRL

Nay, let her fling me ! Artemis will save.

DAPHNIS

Thou can'st not flee from Love ; no maiden can.

THE GIRL

By Pan, I do ! But thou aye bear'st his yoke.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

DAPHNIS

I fear he give thee to a meaner man.

THE GIRL

Many my wooers, but none hath my heart.

DAPHNIS

A wooer, too, 'mongst many here come I.

THE GIRL

What shall I do, friend ? Full of woe is wedlock.

DAPHNIS

Nor woe nor pain hath marriage, but a dance.

THE GIRL

Ay, but they say that women dread their lords.

DAPHNIS

Nay, rule them rather. What do women fear ?

THE GIRL

Travail I dread. Keen pangs hath childbearing.

DAPHNIS

Thy Lady, Artemis, will ease the pain.

THE GIRL

But I fear childbirth for my beauty's sake.

DAPHNIS

A mother, thou shalt glory in thy sons.

THE GIRL

What wedding-gift dost bring, if I say 'yes' ?

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

DAPHNIS

My herd, my woodland, and my pasturage.

THE GIRL

Swear not to leave me after to my woe !

DAPHNIS

Never, by Pan, e'en did'st thou drive me forth !

THE GIRL

Wilt build a house and wall a yard for me ?

DAPHNIS

I'll build a chambered house, and tend thy flocks.

THE GIRL

But oh ! what shall I tell my aged sire ?

DAPHNIS

He'll praise thy wedlock when he learns my name.

THE GIRL

Tell me thy name. A name oft gives delight.

DAPHNIS

Daphnis—of Lycidas and Nomæa born.

THE GIRL

Well-born indeed ! But no less well am I.

DAPHNIS

Of honoured birth, I know. Thy sire's Menalcas.

THE GIRL

Show me thy grove where stands thy cattle-stall.

DAPHNIS

Hither, and see how soft my cypress blooms !

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

THE GIRL

Browse, goats ; I go to view the herdsman's place.

DAPHNIS

Feed, bulls ; I'll show my grove unto the maid.

. . . . .

THE GIRL

What dost thou, satyr ? Why dost touch my  
breasts ?

DAPHNIS

To know if those young apples there are ripening.

THE GIRL

By Pan, I'm fainting ! Take thy hand away !

DAPHNIS

Courage, dear girl ! Why shak'st thou so for fear ?

THE GIRL

Would'st thrust me in the ditch and wet my gown ?

DAPHNIS

See, I will throw this fleece beneath thy robe.

THE GIRL

My girdle is torn off ! Why did'st thou loose it ?

DAPHNIS

I vow this firstling to the Paphian one.

THE GIRL

Oh wait ! . . . If some one came ! . . . I hear a  
noise !

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

DAPHNIS

The cypresses are murmuring of our love.

THE GIRL

My kirtle is in rags, and I am naked.

DAPHNIS

An ampler kirtle will I give to thee . . .

THE GIRL

All things to-day ; thou'lt grudge e'en salt to-morrow !

DAPHNIS

. . . And oh to give my life along with it !

THE GIRL

Forgive me, Artemis ; I break thy vow !

. . . . .

DAPHNIS

I'll slay a calf to Love, the cow to Cypris.

THE GIRL

A maid I hither came, a wife go hence.

DAPHNIS

Ay, but a mother and a nurse of children.

So these twain, joving in their youthful limbs,  
Babbled together, and love's stolen sweet  
Tasted. Then up she rose, and silently  
Moved off to tend her flock, her eyes downcast,  
But gladness in her heart. He towards his herd  
Of bulls departed full of a lover's joy.

## XXVIII

### THE DISTAFF

DISTAFF, friend to the spinner, thou whom grey-eyed

Pallas gives to the wise and careful housewives,  
Boldly come with me unto Neleus' lordly  
Township, there where a holy fane of Cypris  
Stands green-lit with a roof of tender rushes.  
Waft me yonder, ye kindly winds of heaven,  
So that there I may greet my friend with gladness,  
Yea, and kiss and be kissed by him, by Nicias,  
Sacred child of the passion-breathing Graces !  
Then, O daughter of ivory carved with endless  
Labour, into the hand of Nicias' helpmeet  
Thee I'll give ; for with her much wealth of woven  
Work, men's raiment and women's wavy garments,  
Thou shalt fashion ; for twice a year the fleeces  
Soft of ewe-mothers reared in grassy meadows  
Would Theogenesis, lovely-ankled lady,  
Shear, so toilsome she is and wise and thrifty.  
Ne'er would I unto lax and lazy houses  
Grant this gift from the land where our abodé is ;  
For thy city did Archias the ancient,  
He from Ephyra, build, to make the marrow  
Of Trinacria, yea, the town of great men.



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Henceforth now thou shalt lie within the dwell-  
ing

Of that leech who is learn'd in many potent  
Drugs which cure us of all our dire diseases.

In Miletus, a fair Ionian city,  
Shalt thou dwell, that amongst her fellow-women  
There, Theogenis own the best of distaffs,  
Yea and ever thou may'st recall the poet  
Once her guest ; for whoever looks upon thee  
Will say : ' Surely a mighty favour follows  
Tiny gifts,—any gifts from friends are precious.'

## XXIX

### THE LOVER'S COMPLAINT

'WINE,' they say, 'is the well of Truth';  
And we in our cups should truthful be.  
I will say what lurks in my soul, dear youth—  
Thou givest not all thy heart to me.

And well I know it; for half my while  
Thy loveliness makes me to live in joy,  
And the rest is ruin,—yea, if thou smile,  
A day of the Blessèd is mine, sweet boy;

And if thou frown, then all is dark.  
Is it seemly to wrong thy lover so?  
Oh, hearken unto thine elder, hark—  
One day thou wilt thank me for't, I know.

Nest upon only one tree-bough  
Whither no fierce creature climbs; nor perch  
Now upon this fair branch, and now  
Upon that, ever shifting in fickle search.

If a man but call thee fair, straightway  
Thy fancy for him is of olden date,  
And thy love for me but of yesterday—  
Thou hast learned the airs of the haughty great.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Ah, love thine equal ever, for so  
Good fame shall be thine as a citizen,  
And Eros never will work thee woe,  
Though lightly he conquers the hearts of men.

Soft hath he made my iron heart—  
By thy tender mouth, remember, I pray,  
Last year thou wert younger than now thou art,  
And old we grow ere a man cry 'nay';

And wrinkles will come, and Youth will go  
Beyond recapture, for on the wing  
He speedeth, and we are all too slow  
To catch with our hands such a fleeting thing.

Bethink ye of this, and be less coy,  
Loving thy lover guilelessly,  
That, thou being no more a beardless boy,  
Achilles and *his* friend we may be.

The gold apples now for thee would I bring,  
Or Cerberus drag from his watch below;  
But if my words to the winds thou fling,  
Murmuring 'Oh, why trouble me so?'—

Then, I would not come to thy court-yard door  
E'en at thy summons—my passion were o'er.

### XXX

#### THE LOVER'S LAMENT

ALAS this malady sore and dread !—  
For a youth have I fevered many a week,  
Not passing fair, but from foot to head  
All grace, and a witching smile on his cheek.

As yet my suffering comes and goes—  
One day held, on the next I'm free ;  
But now I shall know nor sleep nor repose,  
For lately the boy cast upward at me,

As he passed on his way, a shy swift look,  
(To meet my eyes he had deemed o'er-bold)  
And rosy he flushed, and my heart was took  
In the grasp of Love with a firmer hold.

And home I hied with a fresh heart-sore,  
And bitterly charging my soul I said :  
' What dost thou ? Fool, wilt thou not give o'er  
See'st not these silver hairs on thy head ?

'Tis time thou wert wise who hoary art  
And for follies of young men all unmeet ;  
Nay more, it were better to keep thy heart  
From love for a fair boy, grievous and sweet.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

For his life fleets by like a fleet-foot fawn,—  
To-morrow he sails for another shore,  
And the lovely flower of his youthful dawn  
Shall bloom 'mid his boyish mates no more.

But love and desire will aye devour  
The heart of his lover remembering  
Him in dreams of the midnight hour,  
And a year no cure to his woe can bring.'

And many another word of blame  
I spake to my soul, but it answered me :  
'The man that thinks he can put to shame  
The wily love-god, a fool is he,

And would think to number the stars above,  
Setting them all in nines a-row ;  
And now I must bear the yoke of Love  
With outstretched neck if I will or no ;

For this, poor wight, is the love-god's way—  
O'er Zeus and Cypris he oft prevails ;  
I am a leaf that lives but a day,  
Drifting in light winds, driven by gales.'

## XXXI

## THE FORGIVENESS OF APHRODITE

WHEN Cytherea saw  
Her dead Adonis there  
With cheeks all pale and wan  
And soilure on his hair,  
She bade the young Loves bring  
The boar unto her gaze ;  
And away on the wing they went  
And ranged the forest maze.  
They found the hateful boar  
And bound him with chain and thong ;  
One set a noose on his neck  
And haled him captive along,  
Another drove behind  
And shot him with shafts from his bow ;  
And dreading the goddess's wrath  
The beast went full of woe.  
' O cruellest beast of all,'  
Then Aphrodite saith,  
' Did'st wound that thigh, hast smitten  
My leman to the death ?'  
And the beast said : ' Cytherea,  
I truly swear to thee  
By thyself, thy Love, these bonds  
And those who have taken me,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

I sought not to wound thy beauteous  
Leman, but gazed on him  
As he were a statue, and madly  
I yearned to kiss that limb,  
For sore was the heat of my love,  
And fair was his thigh to see.  
And now, O goddess, wreak  
Thine utmost anger on me.  
Take these unruly tushes  
And break them off, for why  
Should I bear such amorous things,  
What need of them have I ?  
And if this be not enough,  
Then cut my lips off too ;  
For why did I dare to kiss ? '  
And Cypris 'gan to rue,  
And bade the young Loves loosen  
His trammels and set him free.  
And ever from that day forth  
He followed her faithfully,  
And ne'er to the wild wood went,  
But would come at her beck and call  
To fawn at the goddess's feet  
And the feet of the young Loves all.

## EPIGRAMS

THESE dewy roses and this clump of thyme  
Are offered to the nymphs of Helicon,  
This dark-leaved laurel, Pythian god, to thee—  
Laurel, thy glory from the Delphic rock.  
The blood too of this white he-goat which gnaws  
The terebinth twigs shall stain the altar-stone.

Daphnis, the fair of hue, that piper sweet,  
And rustic minstrel offers to Pan—these :  
His flute and pipe, his crook and javelin keen,  
His fawn-skin and the scrip that once held apples.

Daphnis, asleep in the leaf-strewn grot, and resting  
thy weary  
Body, the huntsman's toils now on the moun-  
tains are set.

Pan pursues thee, and he who bindeth a yellow ivy  
Wreath on his beauteous head, wanton Priapus  
himself.

Into the grot they are coming, the pair ; so flee  
away quickly,  
Flee away ; oh, shake off numbness and gather-  
ing sleep.



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Goatherd, if thou the oak-set winding path  
Wilt follow, thou shalt find a fig-wood statue  
New-wrought, unbarked, obscene, earless, but fit  
To do the child-begetting deed of Cypris.  
A sacred garth encircleth it, and streams  
Aye flowing from the rocks are all a-bloom  
With laurel, myrtle, and sweet-smelling cypress.  
And there the grape-born vine spreads everywhere  
Its tendrils, and the blackbirds of the spring  
Pour forth their changeful songs, and nightingales  
Warble in answer their low dulcet notes.  
There sit thee down and pray to sweet Priapus  
To rid me of my love for Daphnis, saying  
That then I'll sacrifice a pretty kid ;  
But, an he grant it not, then, if success  
In love be mine, I'll make a triple offering ;  
For I will slay a heifer, a shag he-goat  
And a stall-fed lamb—The god accept my vows !

Thyself not old didst leave an infant son,  
And now thou liest here, Eurymedon.  
The State shall honour him, remembering  
From what a noble father he did spring.

Unto Miletus hath Asclepios come  
To lend his aid to Nicias the physician  
Who daily prays to him with sacrifice,  
And bade Eetion with his cunning hand  
To carve this statue out of fragrant cedar,  
Giving a great reward therefor—and he  
Into the work put all his artistry.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Stranger, a Syracusan, Orthon hight,  
Bids thee beware of roaming drunk by night  
In wintertime ; for now my fate is this—  
A deeper grave in my own land to miss.

I, Xenocles, the poet set up here  
This marble altar to the Muses dear.  
None can deny my glory, nor can I  
Ungratefully the tuneful Nine deny.

This is the tomb of Eusthenes, so wise  
In guessing what the soul is from the eyes.  
His comrades laid him deep in alien earth ;  
They loved him, for they knew the poet's worth ;  
And so when dead and powerless, he had all  
Due rites that appertain to burial.

This is no wanton Cypris ; pray to her  
In her heavenly name ; for this her effigy  
Was raised by chaste Chrysogone in the house  
Of Amphicles, with whom she lived her time  
In concord, wife and mother. Year by year  
They happier grew ; for they that Heaven heed  
Themselves receive from Heaven a fairer meed.

This changer's table payeth equal sums  
To foreigner and cit—whichever comes.  
Put down your coins, and take what is your due ;  
You'll find on scrutiny the reckoning true.  
Others may shirk ; Caïcus can aright  
Tell foreign coins for clients e'en by night.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Thus shall I know, wayfarer, if more grace  
Thou showest to the good than to the base ;  
For thou wilt say : " A blessing on the stone  
Which here lies light on good Eurymedon ! "

This little child untimely and all too young  
(She was but seven) died grieving for her brother,  
Scarce two years old, who tasted hateful death  
Before her. Woe is thee, Peristera,  
How near at hand the god sets bitterest grief !

Behold this statue, stranger, earnestly,  
And when thou winnest to thy home, say this :  
" I saw the statue of Anacreon,  
That prince of poetry, in Teos isle."  
And if thou add : " and well he pleased the  
young,"

Thou'lt have portrayed the whole man to the life.

These words are Doric, and here stands the man  
Who first wrote comedy—'tis Epicharmus.

Bacchus, for thee dwellers in Syracuse  
(No mean abode) set up this statue here  
In bronze as to a fellow-citizen.

Meet that they bear in mind his words of wisdom,  
And pay him due regard ; for sage he was  
And gave good counsel to us all and apt  
For use in life—a blessing on his head !

The bitter bard Hipponax lieth here.  
If thou'rt a rogue, come not his tomb anear ;  
But if thou'rt good and from a worthy sire,  
Sit boldly down, yea, sleep, if thou desire.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

From boy Medeios to his Thracian nurse  
This wayside tombstone! (Cleitas graved the  
verse)

Thanks be for all the loving tenderness  
She showed him! Still we call her "Usefulness."

Stand and behold Archilochus, the bard  
Of ancient days, whose famed iambs go  
From furthest East to West. Apollo loved him  
For that he tuneful was and skilled to write  
Sweet poetry, and sing it to the lyre.

This man, Peisander of Camiros, best  
Of all the ancient poets wrote the tale  
Of Heracles, the hefty lion-slayer,  
And all his labours. Be it known to you  
That him in bronze the people set up here  
After his death many a month and year.

## OTHER POEMS

UNHAPPY Thyrsis, what avails it, say,  
To weep thy cheeks with idle tears away ?  
Thy pretty kid hath entered Hades' maw ;  
A fierce wolf seized her with his cruel claw,  
And now the dogs are barking. Tears are vain ;  
Nor bone nor ash of her doth now remain.

I prithee by the nymphs, wilt play for me  
On double pipe some pretty melody ?  
My quill shall strike the lyre ; Daphnis the while  
Shall with his wax-bound pan-pipe us beguile.  
Anigh this oak behind the grot let's keep  
And rob the goat-god of his mid-day sleep.

## BION

### LAMENT FOR ADONIS

I RAISE my wail for Adonis—dead is the fair  
Adonis—

“Dead is the fair Adonis,” the Loves in answer  
wail.

Sleep no longer, Cypris, on bedding of purple, but  
rouse thee,

Robe thee in sombre array, beat breast, poor  
wretch, and groan,

Crying aloud unto all men: “Dead is the fair  
Adonis.”

I raise my moan for Adonis; the Loves in answer  
moan.

The beauteous Adonis is lying, is lying among the  
mountains,

Smit by the boar’s white tusk, smit in his fair  
white thigh.

Scarce doth he breathe, and his life-blood (alas  
for Cypris!) is flowing,

Flowing his white flesh o’er, and dim with death  
is his eye.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Fled is the rose from his lips, and the kiss of his  
mouth hath withered,  
Which never shall Cypris cull; but e'en can a  
dead kiss avail  
To pleasure her. Little he wots that she kissed  
him there a-dying.  
I raise my wail for Adonis; the Loves in answer wail.  
Grievous alas! is the wound in Adonis' thigh,  
yea, grievous,  
But sorer far is the wound that she in her heart  
hath deep.  
His well-loved hounds make moan, make moan for  
their youthful master,  
There at his side, and the nymphs from the  
mountain-tops all weep.  
The goddess hath loosed her tresses, and wanders  
away through the thickets,  
Mourning, dishevelled, unsandalled; the bram-  
bles her fair flesh tear  
And are smeared with her sacred blood, as wailing  
she goes through the valleys,  
Goes through the winding vales, and with sharp  
cries rends the air.  
She calls on her Syrian husband, she calls him her  
young Belovèd;  
And her life-blood splashes around her waist and  
around her thighs,  
And thence on her bosom it comes, and her  
breasts are stained with the crimson—  
Snow-white breasts that of yore would flush in  
Adonis' eyes.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

She hath lost her beauteous leman, and lost her heavenly beauty.

Fair was the goddess to see while Adonis lived ;  
but to-day

With Adonis her beauty hath perished. The mountains all are mourning

“ Ah, wellaway for Cypris ! ” ; the oaks cry  
“ wellaway ! ”

The rivers and mountain-springs are weeping for Aphrodite,

Weeping for her sad woe, and for Adonis dead.

Among the dells and knolls the goddess is wailing and weeping,

And the very flowers for grief have turned their petals red.

“ Alas for Cypris,” she cries, and “ Dead is the fair Adonis,”—

“ Dead is the fair Adonis,” Echo calls to her back, Who would not weep and mourn for the sorrow of Aphrodite,

For Cypris’ bitter sorrow who would not cry  
“ Alack ! ” ?

When Cypris saw and beheld the deadly wound of Adonis,

Ah, when she saw the blood which reddened his wasting thigh,

Opening wide her arms, she wailed : “ O Adonis, tarry,

Hapless Adonis, tarry ; I would hold thee again ere thou die.



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

I would drink thy love to the lees. Thy kiss will  
be *thou* for me henceforth,  
Thy kiss is Adonis now ; for Adonis away doth  
flee.

Far away art thou fleeing—to Acheron, unto the  
hateful

Cruel lord of the Dead, ah, wellaway ! woe is me !

I cannot follow thee thither ; a god am I, and I  
may not.

Take him, Persephone, take my husband ; stronger  
than mine

Far is thy might ; all things that are fair go down  
to thy kingdom.

Hapless am I above all, and in love insatiable pine.

I weep for Adonis ; Adonis is gone, and sore is  
my terror.

Oh, thou thrice-belov'd, thou art dead, and a  
yearning now

Comes on my soul like a dream ; I am widowed,  
the Loves are as orphans.

With thee my girdle of charm hath perished—  
oh, why didst thou,

Thou, that wert born so beauteous, dare to  
encounter a wild beast ?

Wherefore wert thou so mad as to hunt a cruel  
boar ? ”

Thus Cypris wailed in her woe, and the Loves  
all wailed in answer,

“ Ah, wellaway, Cytherea ; Adonis is now no  
more.”

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

She droppeth as many tears as blood-drops flow  
from Adonis,

And both all turn to flowers, as they fall on the  
earth's face there.

The blood gives birth to the rose, and the tears  
give birth to the wind-flower.

Woe is me for Adonis ! Dead is Adonis the fair.

Weep no more, O Cypris, weep no more for Adonis  
Here by this leafy couch in the forest's lonely  
deep ;

*Thy* couch now let him have, let the dead one lie  
upon *thy* couch.

Lovely in death is he, and like unto one asleep.

Lay him alow on the fair soft couch whereon he  
aforetime

Slept a sacred sleep in the night, thy golden bed  
Where he lay by thy side, that bed which e'en in  
his death doth desire him.

Strew on him garlands of flowers that alas ! like  
him are dead.

Anoint him now with the unguents of Syria,  
sprinkle perfumes,

All sweet perfumes be spent, for spent are the  
sweet one's days.

And now Adonis is lying on couch of purple, and  
round him

The Loves, their curls all shorn, a chorus of wailing  
raise.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

One doth cast his arrows, another his bow upon  
him,  
One his quiver, and one a wing-feather ; kneeling  
anigh  
One looseth Adonis' sandals, and some in a golden  
basin  
Lustral water hold, and one doth lave his thigh ;  
Yet another standeth behind him and fanneth  
him with his feathers.  
“ Alas, for Cytherea,” the Loves cry o'er and o'er.  
Hymen, the god of wedlock, hath quenched his  
torch on the door-posts,  
Petal by petal deflowered his garland, and sings  
no more,  
No more singeth his own sweet song, but, “ Alas  
for Adonis ! ”  
The Graces among themselves the son of Cinyras  
wail,  
Crying “ Adonis, the fair, is dead,” and louder  
they chant it  
Than ever they chant that song : “ Pæan Apollo,  
hail ! ”  
Even the Fates themselves mourn loud for him  
lying in Hades,  
And sing a regretful song, but he may not heed  
their lay,  
Fain though he were to hearken ; for she, that  
sombre Maiden,  
Will not suffer him go—ah, me, and wellaway !

## GREEK 'BUCOLIC POETRY'

Cease from thy sorrowing now, Cytherea, cease  
from thy wailing ;  
When another year comes round, thou shalt weep  
and wail again.

## LOVE AND THE MUSES

LET Eros call the Muses to his aid,  
And may the Muses lead him gently on !  
Oh, may they grant me song to soothe my love,  
Sweet song, that pleasantest of remedies !

## THE WILL OF HEAVEN

ALL things are possible if Heaven will,  
For Heaven can easily all things fulfil.

## LOVE AND THE ALPHEUS

WHEN, after hailing Pisa,  
Alpheus takes the sea,  
His olive-nurturing water  
He guideth unto thee,

O fountain Arethusa,  
And marriage gifts he brings,  
Fair leaves and flowers and sacred  
Dust of the wrestling-rings.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

As underseas he fareth  
Beneath the Ionian blue,  
Oh, little wots the ocean  
Of the river passing through !

That knavish boy, the love-god,  
Who doth all ill contrive,  
By charms and by enchantment  
Hath taught the stream to dive !

### THE FOUR SEASONS

C. WHICH dost thou love best, Myrson, Spring or  
Winter,  
Autumn, or Summer ? Which dost pray for  
most ?  
Summer, the season of accomplished labour,  
Or the sweet Autumn of abundant food,  
Or toilful Winter ? (E'en in Winter oft  
Men take their ease in sloth and idleness.)  
Or is fair Spring thy favourite ? Tell me  
which  
Thou choosest. We have ample time for talk.

M. Men should not dare to judge the works of  
Heaven,  
For sacred are they all and sweet ; but I  
For thy sake, Cleodamus, will confess  
Which season I love most. I choose not  
Summer,

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

For then the sun doth burn me, nor yet  
Autumn,

That season of ill-health. The Winter brings  
The feathery snow, and I fear chills. Let  
Spring,

My darling Spring, be here the whole year  
round !

For then nor frost, nor hot sun troubles us ;  
Then all things swell with sap, and buds are  
rife,

And Day and Night o'er men hold equal sway.

## INSPIRATION

THE Muses fear not Love, but hold him dear  
And ever follow in his train anear.

If that a loveless mortal try to sing,  
They flee and will not teach him anything ;

But if the singer be with love distraught,  
To him are eagerly their presents brought.

And I a witness am that this is truth ;

For if I choose some other god, or youth,  
Then songs refuse my stammering lips to pass ;

But if I sing of Love or Lycidas,  
My lips are opened, and my joyful song  
Like to a river pours itself along.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

### EROS AND APHRODITE

O GENTLE Cyprian goddess, child of Zeus  
And of the Ocean, why art thou so wroth  
With gods and men? Nay, why art thou so  
loathed  
By thine own self (I whispered) as to bear  
Eros, that universal evil? Fierce  
And cruel is his mind, and all unlike  
His beauteous form. Why didst thou give him  
wings  
And far-attaining arrows, so that all  
Should powerless be to ward his venom off?

### AN ADAGE

BEAUTY is woman's glory, valour man's.

### POLYPHEMUS

BUT I will go my way to yonder slope  
Which fronts the sandy shore, singing the while  
An urgent song to cruel Galatea;  
And never shall I quit my darling hope,  
Until the extreme limit of old age.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

### THE CONSTANT DROP

THE constant drop—so runs the fable—  
To hollow out the rock is able.

### SELF-HELP

My friend, you should not always ask  
A carpenter to do your task,  
Nor always seek another's aid.  
Make your own pipe—it's easy made.

### SELF-INTEREST

Ir that my Muse should glory gain,  
Well, then I have not toiled in vain ;  
But if my songs have failed to please,  
Why waste my life on tasks like these ?  
For, had Fate given us double life,  
One made for joy and one for strife,  
Perchance it had been worth our while  
To suffer much for Fortune's smile ;  
But as the gods have given to none  
More than a short and paltry *one*,  
Why do we toil and struggle so,  
And vex our souls each art to know ?  
Why do we spend our life and health  
In striving after greater wealth ?  
Have we forgot our mortal state,  
How small the span allowed by Fate ?



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

### THE SERENADER

O HESPER, Aphrodite's golden light,  
Hesper, thou glory of the purple night,  
Dimmer than Artemis, but brighter far,  
Thou well-belov'd than any other star,  
All hail to thee ! And lend thy kindly aid,  
As I my darling go to serenade.  
Shed thou thy beam in absence of the Moon ;  
For she this evening set an hour too soon.  
No thief am I the traveller to molest,  
I am a lover ; help a lover's hest.

### COMRADES

HAPPY are comrades, when their love's returned.  
Happy was Theseus with Pirithous,  
Although to pitiless Hades he went down ;  
Happy Orestes was in cruel Tauris,  
For Pylades had thither gone with him ;  
Blest was Achilles while Patroclus lived,  
And blest he died, his comrade's fate avenged.

### TO HYACINTH

A DUMBNESS took Apollo to behold  
Thine agony ; each cunning drug he tried,  
With nectar and ambrosia stanch'd the wound,  
But all in vain ; no drug can vanquish Fate.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

### EROS AND THE POET

I DREAMT that Cypris came towards my bed,  
Leading her little son, who hung his head,  
And that her words were these : " Dear minstrel,  
take

This lad and teach him singing." So she spake,  
And went her way. And I then, like a fool,  
Essayed to put the god of love to school,  
As if a willing scholar he would be !

So I began my pastoral minstrelsy,  
Telling him how that Pan devised the flute,  
Athene, the sweet pipe, Hermes, the lute,  
Phœbus, the lyre—and many a suchlike thing.  
But he would pay no heed, but only sing  
His own love-ditties, teaching me the while  
The loves of gods and men—his mother's guile—  
And all that I taught Love I quite forget,  
But all that Love taught me I carol yet.

### THE BOY FOWLER AND EROS

A YOUTHFUL fowler in a woody dell  
While hunting birds one day (as it befell)  
Saw Eros sitting on a box-wood tree, .  
And joyed to think a mighty bird was he.  
So, setting all his arrows in array,  
He stalked the god, who always hopped away.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

At last the boy in disappointed mind  
Flung down his shafts and sought an aged hind  
Who once had taught him skill in archery ;  
And pointing out the perching deity  
He told his tale. The aged ploughman smiled  
And shook his head, and thus addressed the child :  
“ Nay, quit such hunting ; let that bird a-be ;  
Yea, flee from him ; an evil thing is he.  
Happy thou’lt be not having him. If Fate  
Should choose to bring thee unto man’s estate,  
That bird who flies thee now and hops away  
Will perch unasked upon thy head one day ! ”

# MOSCHUS

## A LAMENT FOR BION

WAIL me a sad lament, ye dells and Dorian water ;  
Weep, ye rivers, aloud for Bion the darling of all.  
Trees and plants, make moan, ye groves, give  
voice to your mourning ;

Clustering flowers, breathe forth grief from your  
garlands of woe.

Blush, ye roses, blush ; ye wind-flowers, redden  
with anguish ;

Hyacinth, loudlier speak that lamentation of thine,  
Loudlier speak that word of woe enwrit on thy  
petals,

Cry more shrilly " alas ! ", for dead is the minstrel  
sweet.

*Oh, raise, Sicilian Muses, raise the dirge.*

Nightingales sadly warbling your lays in the leafy  
branches,

Hie you to Sicily now and tell Arethusa this :

" Gone is Bion the herdsman ; with him all sing-  
ing hath perished,

Music is now no more ; mute is the Dorian strain ; "

*Oh, raise, Sicilian Muses, raise the dirge.*

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Swans on the Strymon river, oh raise your sad  
lamentation,

Chant with your moaning mouths music of  
bitterest woe,

Yea, such a ditty as eld will one day grant you  
to carol ;

Say to your native nymphs : " The Dorian  
Orpheus is dead."

*Oh, raise, Sicilian Muses, raise the dirge.*

He that was dear to the herds no longer singeth  
among them,

Sits no longer, alas ! under the lonely oaks ;

Nay, but in Pluto's realm he hymns a forgetful  
ditty ;

Dumb are the vales and hills, silent the mountains  
all.

Even the very kine that roam with the bulls in  
the meadow

Are wailing, and now no more care on the pasture  
to browse.

*Oh, raise, Sicilian Muses, raise the dirge.*

Apollo himself too wept for the fate untimely of  
Bion,

The satyrs and dark-clad sons of the garden-god  
all wept.

The Pans bewail thee in song, and the nymphs of  
the streams in the woodland

Uttered a woeful cry, and the fountains turned  
to tears.

Echo, her rocks among, sore grieveth she now is  
voiceless ;

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Never again any more to return thee the lay from  
thy lips,  
Fruit-trees cast their fruits, and the sweet flowers  
all of them wither ;  
No juice flows from the apples, no honey flows  
from the combs ;  
Shrunk it rots in the wax ; for the honey of thy  
sweet singing  
Flowing no more, what needs honey of bees to be  
cull'd ?  
*Oh, raise, Sicilian Muses, raise the dirge.*

Not so mourned that Siren of old on the lone  
sea-beaches,  
Not so pensively sang the Nightingale 'mong the  
leaves ;  
Ne'er on the heights of the hills so plaintively piped  
the Swallow,  
Never did Ceyx grieve so for her Halcyon's  
fate ;  
Not so fluted the Ceryl of yore on the green sea-  
billows,  
Never so keened the birds down in the dells of  
the East,  
Fluttering round the tomb of Memnon, son of  
the Morning,  
As when they all made moan at the passing of  
Bion away.  
*Oh, raise, Sicilian Muses, raise the dirge.*

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

The nightingales and the swallows to whom he  
taught their music,  
They who had loved him well, wailed at the foot  
of the trees,  
Wailed in a chorus of woe, and in song antiphonal  
chanted :

“Sorrowing birds, make moan, for ye are his  
mourners too.”

*Oh, raise, Sicilian Muses, raise the dirge.*

O, thou thrice-beloved, who now shall play on  
thy pan-pipe,  
Who that will dare lay mouth unto its reeds  
again ?

For still it breathes of thy lips, still breathes with  
the breath of thy singing,  
And Echo still on thy songs feeds in the tuneful  
pipes.

Lo, shall I bear it a gift unto Pan ? Ah, haply  
the goat-god

Were afraid he should win, e'en he, only the  
second award !

*Oh, raise, Sicilian Muses, raise the dirge.*

Now Galatea regrets thy songs, whom of old thou  
rejoiced'st

There as she sat by thy side down by the sea-  
bank's edge.

Sweeter thy songs were to her than the songs of  
her swain Polyphemus ;

Him did the fair nymph fly ; dearer wert thou  
than the wave.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Now, all heedless of ocean, she sits on the lone sea-beaches,

Or, haply, among the hills tendeth the herd that was thine.

*Oh, raise, Sicilian Muses, raise the dirge.*

Perished along with thee now are all the gifts of the Muses,

Passionate kisses of girls, passionate kisses of boys.  
Sorrowing round thy corse the Loves are weeping and wailing ;

Cypris regrets thee more than Adonis' dying kiss.

O Meles, river of all most sad, this grief is another,  
This is a second woe—Homer of old too died,  
He that sweetest voice of Calliope ; him too, men say,

All thy waters bewailed, him, of thy children the best.

Yea, and the sea was filled with thy voice, and now for another

Son thou dost weep, yea, now wailest another woe.  
Dear were they both to the wells of song ; for of fount Hippocrene,

Homer drank, but Bion, fount Arethusa, of thee.  
Homer of Helen told, and Achilles and brave Menelaüs ;

Bion sang no wars, nothing for tears or wail.

Pan and the keepers of kine were the gentle themes of our herdsman ;

Pan-pipes too he made, and his sweet-breathed heifer milked.



## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Yea, and he taught us the love of boys, and  
roused in our bosoms  
All Aphrodite's charm, all the delights of  
desire.

*O, raise, Sicilian Muses, raise the dirge.*

Every famous city, and every town doth lament  
thee ;

Ascra for thee grieves more far than for Hesiod  
dead ;

Not so much do the woods of Bœotia sorrow for  
Pindar,

Not so much for Alcæus mourneth Lesbos the  
fair ;

Not so sore for Anacreon waileth the Teian city ;  
More than for Archilochus Paros lamenteth for  
thee ;

Thy songs more than Sappho's chanteth sad  
Mitylene,

And Syracuse now in thee another Theocritus  
hails.

I from the western land of Ausonia bring thee a  
poem,

I that from thee did learn the pastoral strains I  
know ;

For I did inherit thy Dorian Muse ; thy wealth  
unto others

Didst thou leave, but to me the guerdon of  
country song.

*O, raise, Sicilian Muses, raise the dirge.*

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Woe is me ! When the mallows and parsley green  
in the garden  
Fade, and the curling dill that bloometh so fresh  
and fair,  
They ever live again, and flourish anew in the  
spring-time,  
When the revolving year bringeth their season  
back ;  
But we mighty and strong, we men so wise in our  
wisdom,  
Whenso we perish, are laid heedless in hollow  
Earth,  
Sleeping the long, long, endless sleep that knows  
not of waking,  
Even as thou shalt lie swathèd in silence for aye.  
And now the nymphs all deem they hear but the  
marsh-frog warbling,  
And little I envy them that ; for his is an ugly  
song !  
*O, raise, Sicilian Muses, raise the dirge.*

Poison came to thy lips, O Bion, poison assailed  
thee.  
How could so bitter a thing on *thy* lips not turn  
sweet ?  
Who could of mortals be so cruel as mix thee a  
death-cup,  
Or give it to thee at thy call ? Nameless in song  
shall they be.  
*O, raise, Sicilian Muses, raise the dirge.*

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

But Retribution was theirs ! And to me is left  
lamentation.  
Ah, if as Orpheus of old, or Odysseus, or Heracles,  
I,  
I could have gone down too unto Hades, thither  
had I gone,  
E'en unto Pluto's house to behold thee ; and if  
that thou sing  
There unto Hades' Lord, I had hearkened thee.  
Now to the Maiden  
Raise a Sicilian song, thou, sing her a pastoral lay.  
She a Sicilian is, that Queen, and played on the  
sea-shore  
Under the Etna crags, and she knows the Dorian  
strain.  
Not unguerdoned shall be thy song, and, e'en as  
to Orpheus,  
That sweet harper, she gave to lead his Eurydice  
back,  
So unto thee will she give to return to the hills,  
O Bion—  
Ah, and had *my* song power, I too to Pluto had  
sung.

### THE LOVE-CHAIN

PAN loved his neighbour, Echo,  
The leaping Satyr, she ;  
The Satyr raved of Lyde—  
Unhappy lovers three !

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

As Echo for the Satyr  
    (Whose darling was unkind)  
So Pan for Echo languished,  
    And thwarted Eros pined.

For each did hate a lover,  
    Yet each with love did burn ;  
And as each hurt the other,  
    So each was hurt in turn.

To those that are hard-hearted  
    This lesson I would prove—  
“ Be kind to one that loves you,  
    For some day *you* may love.”

### LAND AND SEA

WHEN gentle winds are blowing  
Across the azure sea,  
I feel my faint heart glowing  
With valour's ecstasy.

    And then far more  
    Than doth the shore  
The placid ocean lureth me.

But when the waters whiten  
With curling crests of foam,  
When mighty billows frighten,  
Ah, then I think of home.]]

    The land and trees  
    Outvalue these—  
Ah, then through shady woods I'd roam.

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

For e'en if there it bloweth,  
The pine-tree sweetly sings.  
Oh, what a life he knoweth  
Whose house hath canvas wings !  
    On sea his toil,  
    And fish his spoil—  
*I'd sleep 'neath leafy murmurings.*

And I would hear  
The brooklet near ;  
For that's the noise  
For country boys.

## EROS A RUNAWAY

THE Cyprian Aphrodite on a day  
Clamoured for Eros who had run away.  
“ Whoe'er,” she cried, “ hath seen my errant son,  
And tells me on what road he is, hath won  
A kiss from Cypris as his recompense ;  
Moreover, if he hither bring him thence,  
He'll get still better guerdon. One can well  
My truant lad from twenty others tell.  
Not white, but fire-hued is his flesh ; eyes bold,  
Piercing and bright ; soft-spoken, evil-souled  
Is he—diverse his tongue is from his mind ;  
His voice is honey-sweet, his heart unkind.  
He is a cozener and a madcap blent ;  
His curls are fine, his face is impudent ;

## GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Tiny his hands are, but his arrows go  
As far as Acheron and the King below ;  
Naked his limbs, but wrapt in guile his wits,  
And like a bird from here to there he flits,  
Settling alike on man's and woman's heart.  
Small is his bow, and tiny is his dart,  
Tiny his dart, and yet to Heaven it flies ;  
A golden quiver on his shoulder lies ;  
Within it those sharp-headed arrows be  
Wherewith he often woundeth even me.  
Though dire all these, his torch is yet more dire,  
His little torch, that sets the sun afire.  
If that thou catch him, bind him ruthlessly ;  
If he should weep, beware ! he's cheating thee ;  
If laugh, hale him along ; if he be bold  
To kiss thee, flee—his lips a poison hold ;  
If he should ask : ' Wouldst thou my arms  
essay ? '  
Oh, touch them not, for steeped in fire are they."

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